READING JI KANG'S ESSAYS

XUANXUE IN EARLY-MEDIEVAL CHINA

David Chai



Reading Ji Kang's Essays

This is the first English-language book on the philosophy of Ji Kang. Moreover, it offers the first systematic treatment of his philosophy, thus filling a significant gap in English-language scholarship on early medieval Chinese literature and philosophy.

David Chai brings to light Ji Kang's *Xuanxue* heritage and explores the themes in his writings that were derived from classical Daoism, most notably the need for humanity to return to a more harmonious co-existence with Nature to further our own self-understanding. His analysis is unique in that it balances translation and annotation with expositing the creative philosophizing of *Xuanxue*. Chai analyzes the entirety of Ji Kang's essays, exploring his philosophical reflections on music, aesthetics, ethics, self-cultivation, and fate.

Reading Ji Kang's Essays will be of interest to scholars and students of Chinese philosophy and literature. It offers the first comprehensive philosophical examination of a heretofore neglected figure in *Xuanxue*.

David Chai is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is the author of *Zhuangzi and the Becoming of Nothingness* (2019) and editor of *Daoist Encounters with Phenomenology: Thinking Interculturally about Human Existence* (2020) and *Dao Companion to Xuanxue [Neo-Daoism]* (2020). Professor Chai is also the author of numerous papers on Chinese and comparative philosophy.

To my beloved Lulu

Reading Ji Kang's Essays

Xuanxue in Early-Medieval China

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2022
by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Chai, David, 1971– author.
Title: Reading Ji Kang's essays : Xuanxue in early-medieval China / David Chai.
Description: New York, NY : Routledge, 2021. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2021018495 (print) | LCCN 2021018496 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Ji, Kang, 223-262. | Philosophy, Chinese.
Classification: LCC B128.C3854 C43 2021 (print) | LCC B128.C3854 (ebook) | DDC 181/.114—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021018495
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021018496

ISBN: 978-0-367-35363-6 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-07301-9 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-0-429-33142-8 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9780429331428

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Ji Kang's Life

Ji Kang 嵇康 (223–262 CE), whose original surname was Xi 奚 and whose style name was Shuye 叔夜, hailed from Zhi 銍 county in the principality of Qiao 譙 (present-day Anhui 安徽 province). Prior to moving to Qiao, the Ji family lived in Kuaiji 會稽 (also pronounced Guiji) county. Regarding his life history, the oldest historical account is the following passage from the *Sanguo zhi* 三国志:

> At that time there was also Ji Kang from Qiao. The style of his writing was vigorous yet elegant, and he was fond of discussing the works of Laozi and Zhuangzi. He loved the extraordinary but he had a fearless character. During the Jingyuan period (260–263 CE), he became entangled in a certain affair and was executed.[1]

Brief as this statement is, it is very illuminating.

More details on Ji Kang's life are contained in Sun Sheng's 孫盛 *Weishi Chunqiu* 魏氏春秋, *Weishi Chunqiu Yitong* 魏氏春秋異同, and *Jin Yangqiu* 晋陽秋, but these works only survive as fragments in other historical texts.[2] Gan Bao 干寶 in his *Jinji* 晉記,[3] Yu Yu 虞預 in his *Jinshu* 晉書,[4] and Zhang Yin 張隱[5] in his *Wenshi zhuan* 文士傳, also provide key biographical information on Ji Kang, as does Dai Kui 戴逵 in his *Zhulin Qixian lun* 竹林七賢論.[6] What is more, Ji Kang's letter to Shan Tao 山濤 touches upon his life, as does Xiang Xiu's rhapsody *Sijiu fu* 思舊賦. While many of the aforementioned texts are either lost or survive as fragments in other works, enough of their information is found in the commentary on the *Sanguo zhi*[7] and in the *Shishuo Xinyu* 世說新語[8] to formulate a clear picture of Ji Kang's life and thought.

When it comes to the official biography of Ji Kang included in the dynastic history of the Jin (*Jinshu* 晉書),[9] we are warned by Robert Hans van Gulik that

> it is a most superficial account, which shows it had been carelessly patched up from various secondary sources … one would conclude

DOI: 10.4324/9780429331428

> that the materials upon which this account is based date from late in the Jin period, when writers were afraid to offend the Jin rulers, the descendants of the Sima clansmen of the Wei period.[10]

Putting van Gulik's warning aside, we can turn to the *Sanguo zhi* and Pei Songzhi's 裴松之 commentary which cites Yu Yu's *Jinshu*:

> The Kang family was surnamed Xi and came from Kuaiji county. Prior to Kuaiji, they lived in Zhi county in the principality of Qiao, changing their name to Ji by keeping the top portion of their surname's character and replacing the lower portion with the character for mountain to cover over their original surname. Another saying is that in Zhi there was Mount Ji, and as the family settled on its side, they took it for their surname.[11]

A statement similar to the one above appears in the *Shishuo Xinyu*, specifically in the appended notes where Wang Yin's 王隐 *Jinshu* 晉書[12] is quoted as saying:

> Ji Kang's surname was originally Xi. His ancestors moved from Shangyu Prefecture to escape a grievance and settled in Zhi Prefecture of Qiao Principality. Since his family had come from Kuaiji, he took one part of the name of the principality, and pronounced it like his original name, Xi.[13]

Yet another biographical description of Ji Kang is found in the dynastic *Jinshu*:

> Ji Kang, style Shuye, was a man from the town of Zhi of Qiao. Originally his family bore the name of Xi and hailed from Shangyu of Kuaiji; fleeing from enemies, they moved to Qiao. In Zhi their house lay on the slope of Jishan, and they called themselves after this mountain.[14]

The dynastic *Jinshu* continues:

> Ji Kang was still a child when his father died. He was gifted with rare talents, which marked him as a man far above the average. He measured six feet two inches, a handsome and stately figure. He regarded his body as mere clay or wood, and disdained all adornment of his person. People said of him that he combined the majesty of the dragon with the elegance of the phoenix. By nature a man of plain character, he was peaceful and serene, and had few desires. He had a forbearing disposition, and was extremely tolerant. In his studies he did not follow any special school, but read widely, with great understanding. Having grown up he became fond of Laozi and

> Zhuangzi. He married a member of the Wei Imperial family, and was appointed a *zhongsan dafu*.[15]

This passage not only tells us of the hardship Ji Kang faced as a child but his attitude towards life as an adult. One important detail not mentioned in this description is his fierce devotion to his mother and older brother, Ji Xi 嵇喜.[16] To read about them we need to turn to a letter Ji Kang wrote to Shan Tao declaring the end of their friendship: "Add to that the fact that I lost my father when young, was spoiled by my mother and elder brother and never took up the study of the Classics."[17] Ji Kang's brother joined the army as a young man and made a political career out of it; Ji Kang, however, held no interest in doing the same and simply wanted to spend time at the local bamboo grove (*zhulin* 竹林) socializing with his friends and satisfying his intellectual aspirations. We can see this in the following poem he presented to a "cultivated talent 秀才":

> A pair of simurghs hide their dazzling brilliance, folding their wings on the cliffs of Mount Tai … They say they have cut off from the dust and dirt, from beginning to end they would never fail this. How could they know the world's many dangers? … Concealing his looks, he acquiesces to the long tassels—in the end, restrained and bound by the times … Though good or bad fortune depends on oneself, the paths of this world have many hazards. How shall you be able to return to your first garb, harbor the jade and treasure the six ingenious plans? To roam free and easy in the great purity, with us holding hands, forever in each other's company?[18]

In poem five of a series of poems he presented to his brother on entering the army, Ji Kang wrote:

> Mild is the gentle breeze that fans the light dust. Towering white waves roll along the swimming fish. Oh, my pains, from thinking of the fair one: awake I am forever longing, truly he is the one I hold dear.[19]

In poem six of the same series, Ji Kang again speaks of his brother:

> The one I hold dear—where is he? He left me to sojourn far away. Casting off sweet-flag and angelica, he now dons wormwood and mugwort. Though that place may be secluded and remote, is there not falling into trouble? I think of the gentleman being not far from harm's way.[20]

The above three poems reveal Ji Kang's feelings for his loved ones and his desire to live an uninhibited life. Speaking of his longing for freedom, Ji Kang's biography in the dynastic *Jinshu* offers a number of captivating descriptions, the first of which is this: "He was wont to practice

'nurturing nature' and he experimented with the elixir of immortality. Playing the lute and singing verses he therein found complete satisfaction."[21] Roughly a dozen lines later, we are told how Ji Kang

> used to make excursions to the mountains for gathering magic herbs, and when he found the right ones, he would forget to return. Sometimes wood cutters and grass gatherers met him, and they all thought him to be a supernatural being … Ji Kang also met Wang Lie and they went together to the mountains. Wang Lie had obtained a stalactite shaped like a sweetmeat. He himself ate half of it, and the other half he gave to Ji Kang. Then both froze and became like stone.[22]

Finally, about half-way through his biography, we read that

> by nature he was very clever, and he was fond of forging iron. In his garden there was a willow tree with luxuriant foliage. He dug a gully round it, and during summer he sat under this tree and worked at his forging.[23]

As for other members of Ji Kang's family, his wife was the granddaughter of Cao Lin 曹林.[24] After his marriage into the Cao family, Ji Kang was appointed "gentleman of the interior" (*langzhong* 郎中).[25] In the first chapter of the *Shishuo Xinyu*, the appended commentary states that "Ji Kang, husband of the master of the Changle pavilion of Wei,[26] became gentleman of the interior and was bestowed the honorific title of 'grand master of palace leisure.'"[27] Ji Kang had one daughter and one son, whose name was Ji Shao 嵇紹. Both children are mentioned in Ji Kang's letter to Shan Tao: "I am continually unhappy over the recent loss of the company of my mother and elder brother. My daughter is thirteen, my son eight years old—neither grown to maturity, and I am in ill health."[28] This is the only place in Ji Kang's corpus where he mentions his children and just before his death, he is said to have told his son: "Juyuan [i.e., Shan Tao] is here, you will not be alone."[29]

After Ji Kang was sentenced to imprisonment, his family became enemies of the imperial court and were forced to live in hiding. According to the official biography of Ji Shao in the dynastic *Jinshu*, he was "orphaned at the age of ten yet remained filial to his mother, however, because his father was a convicted criminal, he had to live in obscurity."[30] Eighteen years later, during the first year of the Jin emperor Taikang 晉武帝太康 (i.e., 280 CE), Shan Tao recommended Ji Shao for a position at the imperial court and gave him a place to stay as part of the promise he made to Ji Kang to watch over him. In the *Shishuo Xinyu*, Wang Yin's *Jinshu* is cited as the source for this information:

> At the time, because Shao's father, Kang, had been sentenced to death, the officials in charge of selection dared not recommend him. But in his twenty-eighth year, Shan Tao recommended his employment. Emperor Wu issued a special order making him curator of the palace library.[31]

In his early years, Ji Kang was extremely fond of Laozi 老子 and Zhuangzi 莊子, claiming in his letter to Shan Tao that "Laozi and Zhuang Zhou are my teachers."[32] Roughly a dozen lines later, he wrote: "Besides, my taste for independence was aggravated by my reading of Zhuangzi and Laozi; as a result any desire for fame or success grew daily weaker, and my commitment to freedom increasingly firmer."[33] This letter is not the only place where Ji Kang testifies to his admiration of Daoism; in the third poem of his series of poems entitled "Response to the two Guo's 答二郭" he writes:

> Looking closely at the disarray of the world's affairs, piles of danger, there is much grief and fright. Bestowal and recompense exchange as in a marketplace; the great Dao is concealed and will not unfold. When even along a leveled road, one meets thorns and brambles; for a comfortable stroll, where is one to go? The tactical and strategic vie with one another; fame and position cannot be maintained. The simurgh avoids the ensnaring net, consigning itself afar to a mound on Kunlun. Zhuang Zhou mourned the numinous tortoise; prince Sou of Yue feared the royal palanquin. The perfected man first has it in himself, meaning on the uncarved block, delighting in the mysterious void. How are deeds and fame worth dying for? Just so that one's name is listed in bamboo volumes? What I fancy is really like this, Mr. Yang sighed over the forks in the thoroughfare. I am leaving, leaving! I shall pursue my own will—I dare say that my way is not the same as yours.[34]

In poem five of a series of poems on drinking wine, Ji Kang laments:

> I lay aside my zither and let loose my thoughts; as I roam, I cast my hook in the nine-layered depths. In an abysmal pool of a thousand fathoms, misled by a lure, a fish dangles on a hook. Ah! Zhuangzi and Laozi, who perched and rested throughout their long lives. Truly with the transformations of a dragon, may I let my intent roam into the unimpeded.[35]

Finally, in the penultimate poem in the series of poems he wrote to commemorate his elder brother's entry into the army, Ji Kang again reveals his Daoist proclivities:

> I delight myself with my zither and verse; distant roaming is worth treasuring. I embrace the Dao and go forth alone, discarding wisdom

> and leaving behind self. In stillness, I have no entanglements, so what have I to ask from others? For long I shall consign myself to the numinous hills, pleasing my will and nurturing my spirit.[36]

The above examples perfectly illustrate Ji Kang's distaste for Confucian formalism and the political intrigue that tends to accompany it, while highlighting his craving for the spiritual freedom afforded him by Daoism. Not only does Ji Kang find the thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi to be highly inspiring, he also employs their self-cultivation techniques as well as the medicinal prescriptions and physical exercises popularized by Daoist practitioners in the Han dynasty. This love of Daoism is one he unabashedly admits to in his letter to Shan Tao: "Of late I have been studying the techniques of prolonging one's life, casting out all ideas of fame and glory, eliminating tastes, and letting my mind wander in stillness: what is most worthwhile to me is inaction."[37] Ji Kang's contribution to the flourishing of *Xuanxue* 玄學[38] thought in the Wei-Jin period is not only indisputable, his philosophical essays, as we shall see, make him one of the foremost intellectuals prior to the Song dynasty.

Ji Kang's Death

The story behind Ji Kang's death is as large as he was tall. Despite his professed love of Daoism, Ji Kang found himself caught-up in a scandal that would ultimately cost him his life. Had he not married into royalty, he most likely would have lived a long and productive life. Ji Kang's relationship with the Sima clan was not amicable, and in the case of Sima Zhao 司馬昭 (211–265 CE), who rose through the ranks of the Wei court to become regent of the child emperor Cao Mao 曹髦 (r. 254–260 CE), and whose goal was to dismantle the power structure of the Wei dynasty and establish his own rule, Ji Kang would be one of many casualties. There are two persons responsible for Ji Kang's death: Sima Zhao and Zhong Hui 鍾會 (225–264 CE). Sima Zhao, in 263 CE, decided to invade the state of Shu 蜀 and Zhong Hui was one of three generals in charge. Having defeated Shu, Sima Zhao declared himself to be the duke of Jin 晋公.[39] Although Ji Kang's execution was approved by Sima Zhao, it was indubitably the result of his offending Zhong Hui. The *Sanguo zhi*, citing Sun Sheng's *Weishi Chunqiu*, tells what Ji Kang did to warrant such a harsh punishment:

> Zhong Hui was an intimate friend of the Generalissimo [Sima Zhao]. When he heard of Ji Kang's fame, he went to visit him … He arrived in a magnificent chariot and in elegant dress, followed by a cloud of friends. Ji Kang was just sitting on the floor with his legs spread out, engaged in forging iron, and when Zhong Hui arrived, he did not pay him any respect. [When after waiting in vain Zhong Hui turned to

> go,] Ji Kang asked him: What did you hear that you came, and what did you see that you go away? whereupon Zhong Hui answered: Hearing what I did I came, seeing what I see I go. Zhong Hui was much mortified at this occurrence; when the Generalissimo wished to give Ji Kang some office, Ji Kang [refused this] and answered by sharply criticizing worldly life.[40]

The text continues:

> Formerly Ji Kang was on terms of intimate friendship with Xun, son of Lü Zhao from Dongping and Xun's younger brother An. But Xun violated the Lady Xu, An's wife, and then falsely accusing An of unfilial behavior had him thrown in prison. An called upon Ji Kang to testify in his behalf. Ji Kang was a righteous and loyal man, and he undertook to clear Lü An. Now An was a man of a burning character, who had plans for saving the world. Zhong Hui warned the Generalissimo of him, who thereupon expelled him, and subsequently had him executed together with Ji Kang.[41]

The above description of Ji Kang coming to the rescue of Lü An is also found in the *Shishuo Xinyu*, only now Sun Sheng's *Jin Yangqiu* is cited as the source:

> Formerly Ji Kang was an intimate friend of Lü An from Dongping. An's half-brother Xun violated the Lady Xu, An's wife. Then An intended to charge Xun with this crime, and to repudiate his wife, and asked Ji Kang's advice. Ji Kang told him to refrain. Yet Xun did not feel at ease, and secretly he accused An of beating his mother, requesting that An be punished by sending him to a border post. Before leaving, An put up a defense and tried to clear himself. Ji Kang got involved in this process.[42]

Immediately following the above passage, the *Shishuo Xinyu* then cites Zhang Yin's *Wenshi zhuan*:

> When Lü An had become entangled in a process, Ji Kang went to the prison to clear him. Then Zhong Hui impeached Ji Kang before the Generalissimo, saying: Now the Imperial sway is unfolded brilliantly, a soft breeze blows over the four seas. In distant regions there are no wily and obsequious people, in the streets of the capital no dissenting voices are heard. But Ji Kang does not loyally serve the Emperor above, and does not serve kings and princes below. He is overbearing, thinks himself too good for this world, and does not work for the common good. Not only does he not do any good, but also he corrupts the good morals. In former times Tai Gong killed

> Hua Shi, and Confucius had Shaozheng Mao slain, because boasting of their talents they confused and brought doubt to the people. If now Ji Kang is not executed, there is no possibility of making clear the Kingly Way.[43]

An alternative, and perhaps more damning account of Ji Kang offending Zhong Hui, is the following excerpt from the dynastic *Jinshu*:

> Thereupon [Zhong Hui] said to the Generalissimo [Sima Zhao]: Ji Kang is a sleeping dragon, that must not be allowed to rise. There is no need to worry over the Empire, the only sorrow you have regards Ji Kang. Then he accused Ji Kang, saying that he had intended to help Wuqiu Jian, and that he had offended Shan Tao, [saying further]: Have you not heard that formerly in Qi, Hua Shi was put to death, and in Lu, Shaozheng Mao was executed, indeed because they disturbed the people of their time and confused the doctrine? It was therefore that the Holy Sages eliminated such men. Now the theories of Ji Kang, Lü An and their friends are profligate, they criticize and blame the teachings of the Holy Kings [Yao and Shun]. These things must not be tolerated by a ruler, they must be eliminated at their very beginning, in order to purify the morals of the people. The Generalissimo was wont to listen to Zhong Hui and to believe him, and he had both executed.[44]

What is lacking in all of this is Ji Kang's perspective. Thankfully, he composed a very long poem appropriately entitled "Indignation in Confinement" (*youfen* 幽憤) which was written, as the title reflects, during his incarceration:

> Alas! I have few blessings in life; in my youth, I encountered misfortune. I could not know the sorrow of being orphaned—I was then still in my swaddling clothes … I committed my affection to Laozi and Zhuangzi, devalued external things and valued my own person. My intent was to preserve the simple, nurture the plain and keep whole the genuine … Alas! I was not good and true; entanglements have brought me many troubles. They were not sent down by heaven but stemmed from my stubbornness and carelessness. Truth was enshrouded, calamity was formed, and I ended up in prison … Failure and success are determined by fate, so what is there to seek? The ancients had a saying: In doing good, stay clear from fame. Obey the times and keep to a respectful silence, then calamity and remorse will not arise … Warned by my difficulties, I think of reversing course; my heart is filled with anguish and regret. May I strive harder in the future, without making any scent or odor. I shall gather bracken fern on the mountain slopes, loosen my hair

> and withdraw to the cliffs and caves. I shall whistle long and prolong my chants, nurturing my nature, cultivating longevity.[45]

The above poem reinforces the view that Ji Kang was adamantly a Daoist at heart while exhibiting the faintest sense of Confucian loyalty and piety, qualities that were responsible for his landing in trouble! To the very end, however, Ji Kang did not waver in his composure or in doing what he loved most: playing the *qin*. Indeed, one the last statements he made before his death concerned music:

> When Ji Kang was about to be executed on the eastern market, he was entirely unperturbed. Drawing his lute unto him he pulled the strings and played the Guang Ling San. When he had finished this melody, he said: Yuan Xiaoni [his brother-in-law] used to ask me to teach him this tune, but I persistently refused. The melody Guang Ling now dies with me.[46]

This description, found in the *Shishuo Xinyu*, states Ji Kang played a tune called "*Guangling San* 廣陵散" just before his death. Also known as "*Guangling Zhixi* 廣陵止息," this tune would, thanks to Ji Kang, become one of the ten most famous *guqin* 古琴 tunes in the history of Chinese music. An alternate version of the above story also appears in the *Shishuo Xinyu*, but cites Zhang Yin's *Wenshi zhuan*:

> When he was about to be executed his brothers and members of his family all came to take leave of him. Ji Kang did not show any emotion, but asked his elder brother: Have you brought my lute? When his brother said he had brought it, Ji Kang tuned it and played the melody *Taiping* [great peace]. When he had finished it, he said with a sigh: Now the melody *Taiping* dies with me.[47]

This version has Ji Kang playing a tune by the name of "*Taiping Yin* 太平引" but it is the same tune as the *Guangling San*.[48] Ji Kang mentions the *Guangling San* in his *Rhapsody on the Qin* (*qinfu* 琴賦)[49] but regardless of the difference in name, that he chose to celebrate his life with music, as opposed to words, vividly encapsulates his and his bamboo grove associates' worldview and how difficult it was to remain true to their *Xuanxue* beliefs in the toxic dust that was the aftermath of the Han dynasty's collapse.[50]

History of the *Collected Works of Ji Kang*

Regarding the historical records on the *Collected Works of Ji Kang* (*Ji Kang Ji* 嵇康集), the earliest reference appears in the dynastic history of the Sui (*Suishu* 隋書). This text states that the *Collected Works* was

comprised of thirteen books (*juan* 卷) but in the preceding Liang 梁 dynasty, it was listed as having fifteen books and one *lu* 錄 (index and summary).[51] Perhaps due to the frequency of war, the high dynastic turnover, or accidental loss, the *Collected Works* very quickly lost two books and its supplemental material. In addition to the thirteen books of the *Collected Works*, the *Suishu* says Ji Kang also authored a work in three books entitled *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhuanyin* 春秋左氏傳音,[52] and another, also three books, called *Shengxian Gaoshi Zhuanzan* 聖賢高士傳贊.[53] In light of this, Ji Kang's writings as they existed in the Sui dynasty totaled nineteen books, not thirteen.

In the dynastic history of the Tang (*Tangshu* 唐書), Ji Kang's *Collected Works* returned to the fifteen books originally recorded in the Liang dynasty, however, in the dynastic history of the Song (*Songshi* 宋史), the number of books fell to just ten. Indeed, during the Song and Yuan 元 dynasties, there simultaneously existed two accounts of Ji Kang's *Collected Works*. The following reference works list it as being ten books: *Chongwen Zongmu* 崇文總目 by Song Qi 宋祈 (998–1061), *Junzhai Dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志 by Chao Gongwu 晁公武 (1105–1180), *Zhizhai Shulu Jieti* 直齋書錄解題 by Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (1183–1262), *Yeke Congshu* 野客叢書 by Wang Xi 王楙 (1151–1213), the dynastic history of the Song (*Songshi* 宋史),[54] and the Yuan 元 dynasty work *Wenxian Tongkao* 文獻通考. The second account refers to Ji Kang's *Collected Works* as being fifteen books, with the *Tongzhi* 通志 by Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (ca. 1104–1162) being the sole example.

Although reference works from the Song and earlier referred to Ji Kang's corpus as the *Ji Kang Ji*, this practice changed in the Ming 明 dynasty with the switch to a new title: *Ji Zhongsan Ji* 嵇中散集. A total of five editions were produced, their editors being: Huang Shengzeng 黃省曾 (1490–1540), Wang Shixian 汪士賢 (active 16th C.), Cheng Rong 程榮 (active 16th C.), Zhang Xie 張燮 (1574–1640), and Zhang Pu 張溥 (1602–1641). Huang Shengzeng's edition is the oldest and acts as the base text for both Wang Shixian and Cheng Rong. Indeed, Huang Shengzeng's text became the authoritative version of Ji Kang's *Collective Works*, which explains why it was included in both the *Sibu Congkan* 四部叢刊 and *Sibu Beiyao* 四部備要 encyclopedias. Wang Shixian's text is included in the *Han-Wei Liuchao Ershiyi Ming Jiaji* 漢魏六朝二十一名家集 while Zhang Pu's text appears in the larger and more famous work, the *Han-Wei Liuchao Baisan Jiaji* 漢魏六朝百三家集.

At the same time as Huang Shengzeng was compiling his text, Wu Kuan 吳寬 (1435–1504) was working on an edition of his own. Wu Kuan's text differentiated itself from other Ming-era versions in a number of ways: it used the old title of *Ji Kang Ji*, it retained many of the older words and phrases found in pre-Song editions, it kept some of the pre-Song titles of poems, and so forth. Given Wu Kuan's edition contained material not found in the other Ming dynasty sentences, and that phrases missing in

Huang Shengzeng's edition are found in Wu Kuan's, the latter's edition is preferred above all others published in the Ming dynasty. Turning to the Qing 清 dynasty, the *Ji Zhongsan Ji* remained ten books in length and it was listed as such in the following reference works: *Jianyun Lou Shumu* 絳雲樓書目 by Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1562–1664); *Shulin Qinghua* 書林清話 by Ye Dehui 葉德輝 (1864–1927); *Shugutang Cangshu Mu* 述古堂藏書目 by Qian Zeng 錢曾 (1629–1701); *Tieqin Tongjian Lou Cangshu Mulu* 鐵琴銅劍樓藏書目錄 by Qu Yong 瞿鏞 (1794–1836).

The twentieth century saw two primary editions of Ji Kang's *Collected Works* produced: one by Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936) and the other by Dai Mingyang 戴明扬 (1902–1953). Lu Xun's edition is entitled *Ji Kang Ji* and uses Wu Kuan's version as its base text. Although Lu Xun refers to all five Ming-era editions to point out character variants, he cites Huang Shengzeng's edition the most. What is more, Lu Xun's notes do not stray beyond Ji Kang's corpus which severely limits their usefulness for understanding the intellectual milieu in which Ji Kang lived. Dai Mingyang's edition employs a brand-new title: *Ji Kang Ji Jiaozhu* 嵇康集校注.[55] Taking Huang Shengzeng's edition as his base text, however, Dai Mingyang provides copious notes and references to all manner of texts that have even the slightest connection to Ji Kang, making his edition indispensable for scholars of Ji Kang and the broader intellectual climate in which he lived.

Contents of the *Collected Works of Ji Kang*

The opening book (*juan*) in Dai Mingyang's *Ji Kang Ji Jiaozhu* contains all sixty-seven poems by Ji Kang. The second book contains three texts: the *Qinfu* 琴賦 and two letters Ji Kang wrote announcing the end of his friendship with Shan Tao (*Yu Shan Juyuan Juejiao shu* 與山巨源絕交書) and Lü Changdi (*Yu Lü Changdi Juejiao shu* 與呂長悌絕交書). Letters of this nature were quite popular in Ji Kang's time as they allowed people to publicly share their moral and political ideals. Of the two letters, that to Shan Tao is the better known and is included in book forty-three of the dynastic *Jinshu*.

Book three contains two essays: *Buyi Ji* 卜疑集 and *Yangsheng lun* 養生論, and the title of a third, *Jixun lu* 稽荀錄, which is no longer extant. The *Yangsheng lun* is included in book fifty-three of the dynastic *Jinshu* and eloquently demonstrates Ji Kang's familiarity with classical Daoist and Han-era practices pertaining to physical and medicinal nourishment. Book four contains Xiang Xiu's rebuttal to the *Yangsheng lun* (*Huangmen Lang Xiang Ziqi Nan Yangsheng lun* 黃門郎向子期難養生論) and Ji Kang's subsequent reply (*Danan Yangsheng lun* 答難養生論). Book five contains Ji Kang's essay on music and its lack of emotional content, the *Sheng wu Aile lun* 聲無哀樂論.

Book six has three essays: *Shisi lun* 釋私論, *Guancai lun* 管蔡論, and *Mingdan lun* 明膽論. The first essay serves as an important elaboration

of the Daoist principle that the superior person lives in complete harmony with the Dao and is immune to the distinctions of right and wrong, or good and bad. An extract of this essay is included in Ji Kang's biography in the dynastic *Jinshu*. The *Guancai lun* is a deliberate reversal of the historical events involving Guan Shu 管叔 and Cai Shu 蔡叔 and is Ji Kang's contribution to the discourse on political loyalty. The *Mingdan lun* is tasked with proving why wisdom and courage do not produce one another but stem from a person's fate. Book seven is devoted to the topic of learning and how people's joy is the result of their natural agreement with things, not because they were taught to feel as such. To this end, two essays comprise this book: Zhang Miao's 張邈 *Zhang Shuliao Ziran Haoxue lun* 張叔遼自然好學論 and Ji Kang's rebuttal, *Nan Ziran Haoxue lun* 難自然好學論.

In book eight we have Ruan Kan's 阮侃 essay, *Zhai wu Jixiong Shesheng lun* 宅無吉凶攝生論 and Ji Kang's rebuttal, *Nan Zhai wu Jixiong Shesheng lun* 難宅無吉凶攝生論. The discussion carries over into book nine where Ruan Kan gives his reply to Ji Kang's rebuttal in the form of *Shinan Zhai wu Jixiong Shesheng lun* 釋難宅無吉凶攝生論, to which Ji Kang responds with his *Da Shinan Zhai wu Jixiong Shesheng lun* 答釋難宅無吉凶攝生論. These four essays are concerned with the question of whether the fate of a residence can be divined before it is occupied, and whether a residence has any bearing on a person's fate. Finally, book ten includes two short texts. The first, *Taishi zhen* 太師箴, seeks to cast aside Confucian learning and replace it with the natural principles of the Dao; the second, *Jiajie* 家誡, was penned for the benefit of Ji Kang's children, telling them to preserve their integrity at all costs. Dai Mingyang has appended a book of supplemental materials that are attributed to or written by Ji Kang, but are now lost.

On the Format of This Book

This book offers a running commentary of Ji Kang's essays. Each essay has been broken into numbered sections even though such division does not occur in Ji Kang's original Chinese text; I am imposing this system onto the text in order to accommodate my discussion. Ji Kang lived at a time when China's intellectual canon was on the cusp of explosive growth. Although he did not have a vast (by Song dynasty standards) number of works to draw upon, the influence he received from those available to him at the time was extensive. Providing every possible example of influence would make this book unwieldy, hence I have only included the most noteworthy cases. Speaking of which, I am using extant translations instead of doing so myself. The advantage of this is that readers can easily locate said material, comprehend it within the context of that particular text, and be confident in the translation's consistency should they decide further investigation is warranted. When it comes to

Ji Kang's writings, although Robert Henricks' translation has proven invaluable at times, my own interpretation differs enough to warrant a new rendition.

Notes

1 *Sanguo zhi*, book 21: 605. A detailed account of Ji Kang's life and works is given in Knechtges and Chang, volume 2: 1407–1419. An even more detailed account is found in Henricks 1976: 38–191.
2 For more on Sun Sheng 孫盛 (302–373 CE), see Knechtges and Chang, volume 2: 1057–1058.
3 Gan Bao's 干寶 (ca. 282–351 CE) text is no longer extant.
4 Yu Yu's 虞預 (ca. 285–340 CE) *Jinshu* was originally a work of forty-four books (*juan* 卷), however, by the time of the Sui 隋 dynasty, its size had shrunk to just twenty-six books. The edition we have today is just one book.
5 Zhang Yin's 張隱 (ca. 4th C.) text is a collection of biographies of prominent literary men covering the later Han dynasty to the Western Jin. For more, see Knechtges and Chang, volume 2: 1357.
6 For more on Dai Kui 戴逵 (326–396 CE), see Wang Shumei. For a comparative study of the works by Zhang Yin and Dai Kui, see Xiong Ming.
7 Pei Songzhi's 裴松之 (372–451 CE) commentary has been translated into English by Cutter and Crowell.
8 Liu Yiqing's 劉義慶 (403–444 CE) work has been translated into English by Mather.
9 This text was penned by Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (579–648) and is part of the twenty-four official histories of dynastic China. It was originally a work of one-hundred and thirty-two books but the edition that exists today is one-hundred and thirty books. Ji Kang's biography appears in the *Jinshu*, book 49: 1369–1373. A complete translation is found in Henricks 1976: 338–347.
10 Van Gulik, 24–25.
11 *Sanguo zhi*, book 21: 605. Translation is my own.
12 Wang Yin's 王隱 (ca. 275–352 CE) text was originally a work of ninety-three books, however, by the time of the Sui 隋 dynasty its size had shrunk to eighty-six books. The edition that exists today is just eleven books.
13 *Shishuo Xinyu*, chapter 1. See Xu Zhen'e, 10; Mather, 8.
14 *Jinshu*, book 19: 1369; van Gulik, 25–26.
15 *Jinshu*, book 19: 1369; van Gulik, 26. On the title "grand master of palace leisure" (*zhongsan dafu* 中散大夫), Charles Hucker says it was "initiated late in Former Han as a subordinate of the chamberlain for attendants … From Tang on, a prestige title for civil officials of rank 5A or 5B." See Hucker, 192.
16 For more on Ji Kang's biography as written by his brother Ji Xi, see Jiang Jianjun.
17 Dai Mingyang, 178; Hightower, 464.
18 Dai Mingyang, 5; Owen and Swartz, 266–269.
19 Dai Mingyang, 11; Owen and Swartz, 272–273.
20 Dai Mingyang, 11–12; Owen and Swartz, 274–275.
21 *Jinshu*, book 19: 1369; van Gulik, 27–28.
22 *Jinshu*, book 19: 1370; van Gulik, 28.
23 *Jinshu*, book 19: 1372; van Gulik, 28.
24 Cao Lin 曹林 (?–265 CE) was also known as prince Peimu 沛穆王, the tenth son of Cao Cao 曹操.
25 See Knechtges and Chang, volume 2: 1408.

26 Ji Kang's wife, Cao Wanxian 曹婉仙 (dates unknown), held the title of *Wei Changle Tingzhu* 魏長樂亭主.
27 *Shishuo Xinyu*, chapter 1. See Xu Zhen'e, 11.
28 Minford and Lau, 467.
29 *Jinshu*, book 43: 1223.
30 *Jinshu*, book 89: 2298.
31 *Shishuo Xinyu*, chapter 3. See Xu Zhen'e, 94; Mather, 89.
32 Dai Mingyang, 177.
33 Dai Mingyang, 178; Minford and Lau, 464.
34 Dai Mingyang, 97–98; Owen and Swartz, 331–333.
35 Dai Mingyang, 115; Owen and Swartz, 342–343.
36 Dai Mingyang, 27; Owen and Swartz, 286–287.
37 Dai Mingyang, 180; Minford and Lau, 466.
38 To better understand *Xuanxue* 玄學 and its near-equivalent *Qingtan* 清談, see Lo Yuet Keung.
39 Sima Zhao was posthumously given the title prince Wen of Jin 晉文王, followed by emperor Wen of Jin 晉文帝.
40 *Sanguo zhi*, book 21: 606; van Gulik, 30.
41 *Sanguo zhi*, book 21: 606; van Gulik, 32.
42 *Shishuo Xinyu*, chapter 6. See Xu Zhen'e, 195; van Gulik, 32.
43 *Shishuo Xinyu*, chapter 6. See Xu Zhen'e, 195; van Gulik, 33.
44 *Jinshu*, book 49: 1373; van Gulik, 33.
45 Dai Mingyang, 37–52; Owen and Swartz, 289–297.
46 *Shishuo Xinyu*, chapter 6. See Xu Zhen'e, 194; van Gulik, 36.
47 *Shishuo Xinyu*, chapter 6. See Xu Zhen'e, 195; van Gulik, 36.
48 For a historical overview of the *Guangling San*, see van Gulik, 45–49.
49 For a translation, see Owen and Swartz, 358–395.
50 Readers of Chinese who wish to learn more about Ji Kang's life can consult the works by: He Qimin, Tong Qiang, Xiao Dengfu, Xie Daning, and Zhuang Wanshou.
51 *Suishi*, book 35: 1060.
52 *Suishu*, book 32: 928. This work can be found in Dai Mingyang, 621–623.
53 *Suishu*, book 33: 975. This work can be found in Dai Mingyang, 590–620.
54 *Songshi*, book 208: 5327.
55 For more on Dai Mingyang's compilation of Ji Kang's works see: Ye Dangqian, Cui Fuzhang.

1 Music and Emotion

Music has in it neither Grief nor Joy 聲無哀樂論[1]

by Ji Kang

Section 1

There was a guest from Qin who asked the host of Dongye[2]*: I have previously heard the following said: The notes of a well-governed kingdom are peaceful and joyous, and the kingdom in peril has notes that are grievous and longing. Orderliness and chaos depend on governance and music is reflective of this. Thus, feelings of grief and longing are expressed in metal and stone; those symbolizing peace and joy are formed in pipes and strings. When Confucius heard the Shao, he knew of the virtue of Yu and Shun; when Ji Zha listened to stringed instruments, he would know the manners of all the kingdoms. Since these matters have already come to be, the worthies of the past did not doubt them. Now you alone believe sound is without grief and joy. What is the reason for this? If you have a masterly argument to make, please let me hear it.*

The guest from Qin[3] begins this essay by quoting the *Liji* 禮記.[4] When a kingdom is well-governed, its music is tranquil and festive; when it is in peril, its music is sorrowful and pining. Music in the former condition is produced by wind and string instruments, while music in the latter condition is produced by bells and chimes. Reference to these four instruments is not limited to the *Liji*; they are also mentioned in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子: "Thus people in ancient times created [instruments of] metal, stone, bamboo, and strings to express their joy."[5] Portraying musical sound as an expression of the collective feelings of a kingdom is typical of early Confucianism and will be one of the focal points of Ji Kang's critique.[6] For now, the guest reminds the host that even Confucius and Ji Zha 季札[7] could know the moral character and customs of a people by the music associated with them. Such being the case, the guest says, why does the host beg to differ? For the remainder of the essay, the host will explain why he thinks this way.

DOI: 10.4324/9780429331428-1

Section 2

The host responded: Understanding of this issue has been stagnant for a long time, with no one coming to the rescue, thus previous generations have gotten away with abusing the use of names and reality. I will guide you out of ignorance but will speak of just one corner. When heaven and earth combined their virtue, the myriad things were endowed with life; cold and hot then appeared in succession, and the five elements were completed. These were then expressed as the five colors, which were expressed as the five notes. The production of music is like the scents and odors found in the world. Its quality may be good or bad, and although it encounters a turbid and chaotic world, its body remains composed and unchanging. How can love and hate alter the tune, or grief and joy change the tempo?

The host commences his reply by declaring the guest's understanding of music to be the result of prolonged intellectual stagnation regarding the use of names and reality (*mingshi* 名實). Be this as it may, the host says he only needs to discuss one corner (*yiyu* 一隅) of the issue to clarify things. The precedent for the term *yiyu* is found in the *Lunyu* 論語: "If I hold up one corner of a problem, and the student cannot come back to me with the other three, I will not attempt to instruct him again."[8] What does this corner entail? Put simply, Ji Kang's argument is that the five notes (*wuyin* 五音)[9] are but the final manifestation in a series of cosmological transformations. In the case of this essay, the course commences with heaven and earth combining their virtue (*tiandi he de* 天地合德) to produce the myriad things of the world. Prior to Ji Kang, the *Lunheng* 論衡 states the first creational act involves breath (*qi* 氣): "By the fusion of the fluids [*qi*] of heaven and earth all things of the world are produced spontaneously."[10] In an even earlier text, the *Xunzi* 荀子, we are simply told that "when heaven and earth unite, then the myriad creatures are born."[11]

Following this, the host tells us the traits of cold and hot (*hanshu* 寒暑) arise, leading to the completion of the five elements (*wuxing* 五行). With these in operation, the five colors (*wuse* 五色) and five notes come into being. The production of music (*yinsheng* 音聲) is thus the combination of all these elements such that it resembles the fragrances of the world.[12] Just as scents and odors (*chouwei* 臭味) can be either pleasing or foul, music is likewise alluring or shocking to the ears. What remains constant, however, is its body of notes. Such being the case, the host says, how can human feelings of love, hate, grief, or joy (*ai* 愛, *zeng* 憎, *ai* 哀, *le* 樂) alter the tune (*cao* 操) or change the tempo (*du* 度) of a song? The answer is they cannot.

Gathering together gong and shang, this is the harmony of music. This is what the human heart-mind desires the most, and is what the

feelings and passions crave. The people of antiquity knew that feelings should not be indulged and that desires should not be allowed to go unchecked, hence they relied on what could be used and each came to have its own traits. They made sure that grief did not reach the level of injury, or joy the level of obscenity. Relying on affairs to bestow names, things came to have their designations. To refer to crying as grief, and singing as joy, this is merely a rough outline. To say music, music, is there nothing more to it than bells and drums? To say grief, grief, is there nothing more to it than crying and sobbing? To speak from this position, jade and silk are not the genuine reality of ritual and honor, and singing and crying are not the core of grief and joy.

Music is the act of sequencing the five notes and harmonizing the resultant sound. Harmony of sound is what people desire most and what our feelings long for. Knowing this, the ancients took measured steps to prevent over-indulgence in the feelings they experienced when listening to music, or unchecked acts stemming from the desire to continue having them. They did this by relying on what would allow their feelings and desires to acquire their own characteristics: natural harmony (*ziran zhi he* 自然之和). This is a term Ji Kang will discuss later in Section 6 of the essay. What we can say about it here is that harmony is only possible when things are left to their own devices to follow the Dao 道. The phrase that Ji Kang uses to convey such natural reliance (*yin qi suoyong* 因其所用) is adopted from the *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋: "King Wu knew for certain that he was no match for the force of Zhou Xin. He relied on what he could use; how could he have been opposed?"[13] Although this passage would seem to be unconnected to what the host is saying, when we read the opening line of the *Lüshi Chunqiu* text just quoted—"The Three Dynasties treasured nothing so much as relying on the natural state of things. When you rely on the natural state of things, you will be unopposed"[14]—they are in fact discussing the same thing.

In this way, the men of antiquity employed the harmonizing power of the Dao to prevent any grief they felt from causing self-injury, or any joy that arose from leading to acts of indecency. When it comes to not allowing desire to reach its limit (*buke ji* 不可極), the *Liji* details how it is but one of a series of qualities needing control: "Pride should not be allowed to grow; the desires should not be indulged; the will should not be gratified to the full; pleasure should not be carried to excess."[15] When it comes to not allowing joy to mutate into obscenity (*yue buzhi yin* 樂不至淫), the *Lunyu* says: "The 'Cry of the Osprey' expresses joy without becoming licentious, and expresses sorrow without falling into excessive pathos."[16] As for these aspects of human nature acquiring their own traits (*wei zhi jie* 為之節), the *Liji* observes: "Therefore the ancient kings, when they instituted their ceremonies and music, regulated them by consideration of the requirements of humanity."[17] Thus,

with names dependent upon reality, and reality colored by our feelings and desires, the things of the world cannot escape being drawn into this closed-loop of artificial designation, the outcome of which is self-injury and confusion.

Since names are thought to be reflections of reality, a person crying leads to the assumption that they are grief-stricken while someone singing indicates a gayful disposition. True as this may be, the linkage of such outward expressions of feeling to the pre-formed content of music is, for Ji Kang, erroneous. To try and argue otherwise is to believe there is nothing more to music than the raw instruments producing it, and nothing more to grief than crying and sobbing. For Daoism, and Daoist-minded thinkers like Ji Kang, nothing could be further from the truth; even Confucius recognized there are times when things are not what they appear to be: "When we say, the rites! the rites! are we speaking merely of jade and silk? When we say, music! music! are we speaking merely of bells and drums?"[18] In terms of crying and sobbing (*kuqi* 哭泣) during times of grief, the *Zhuangzi*'s voice can be heard in the utterances of the host: "The tones of bell and drum, the posturings of feather and tassel—these are the trivia of music. Lamentation and coarse garments, the mourning periods of varying lengths—these are the trivia of grief."[19] The implications of the above are the focus of the next group of lines in this section of the essay.

How can I explain this? Different places have different customs, and singing and crying are not the same; if a person mistakes one for the other, hearing someone cry will be taken for joy, and listening to someone sing will be taken for sadness. However, the feelings of grief and joy are equal. If one uses feelings that are equal, and expresses a myriad of different sounds, is this not due to the irregularity of music? What is more, if music is harmonious and orderly, it will move people in the most profound manner. Laborers sing about their affairs and the joyous dance to their accomplishments. If the heart-mind contains sorrow and pain, a person's words will be severely aggrieved. Orderly words become poems while orderly sounds become notes. When blended together and sung, people will come together and listen to them. The heart-mind is hence moved by harmonious sound while feelings are affected by bitter words. With people's sighs not yet over, crying and tears issue forth in a torrent. When the grieved heart-mind is concealed within, it will be released after encountering harmonious sounds; even though harmonious sounds are imageless, the grieved heart-mind has its core. To take the core of a grieving heart-mind and make it rely on imageless harmonious sounds, the only thing one will be aware of is grief. How is someone to know what blows a myriad of different ways but allows each thing to remain itself?

At this point in the host's winding explanation of why feelings and music are not intertwined, we come to the issue of the "core" (*zhu* 主, lit.

ruler, master) of grief and joy. For Ji Kang, the question is not whether grief and joy are suitable representations of musical affect; rather, he is arguing that the restrictive application of their names does not authentically match the reality of humanity's complex emotional constitution. To illustrate, the host proceeds to argue that if crying is synonymous with sadness, then people who cry tears of joy will cause confusion; in the case of singing, those who break out in song are said to be joyful; yet there are many instances when songs are sung during periods of mourning, which would lead to confusion. The mix-up over the names grief and joy is a mix-up only at the level of names—there is no confusion at the level of the emotions, and in this regard, they are equal. Being equal insofar as feelings are part of our inborn nature, and human nature is bestowed to us by the Dao, using the fixity of names for human emotions to produce an imageless, irregular (*wuchang* 無常, lit. non-constant) collection of sounds called music, how can confusion not arise?

If one wishes to avoid such a situation, the host says, a solution can be found in harmony. Sounds that are harmonious have a profound effect on us because they allow the heart-mind to exist in a state of equilibrium with the emotions. Holding the heart-mind to one particular state of feeling both stunts the emotional development of that person and limits the evocative force of music to transport them to a higher plane of self-understanding. Thus, the aggrieved heart-mind only hears words of pain while the excited one recognizes what is rosy and gay. Combining words and song into a single harmonious entity draws people together because the heart-mind seeks the harmony of the latter while feelings latch onto the bitterness of the former. Such being the case, even a bereaved heart-mind can find solace in a harmonious song.

Sound, being imageless (*wuxiang* 無象), is reflective of the intangible power of the Dao, a power that makes it the ultimate non-image of the universe.[20] In the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, heaven might be a substitute for the Dao, but its interaction with the myriad things of the world is undeniably Daoist in tone: "Great heaven lacks shape, yet through it the myriad things take form; the most subtle essence does not act, yet through it the myriad things are transformed."[21] Wang Bi 王弼, in his commentary to chapter 14 of the *Daodejing* 道德經, had this to say of the imageless: "[The Dao] is shapeless, leaving no image, and soundless, leaving no reverberation. Thus it can permeate absolutely everything and reach absolutely everywhere."[22] If a person wishes to release feelings of grief hidden in their heart-mind, harmonious music can do so because such harmony is how the Dao interacts with the world. And yet, Ji Kang writes, how is a person to know the source of this soundless harmony, a governing whereby each thing is left to complete its own destiny?[23]

The transmission of manners and customs is what a successful government follows. It is why the court scribes understood where government teachings are won and lost, and by examining the rise and

fall of stately customs, they express their feelings in song so as to satirize their superiors. Thus, it is said: The music of a kingdom in peril conveys thoughts of grief. As for delight, anger, grief, and joy, as well as love, hate, shame, and fear, these eight are how the common people get along with one another and convey their feelings. However, since they belong to different classes, they cannot intermingle. As for the flavors we call sweet and bitter, we can compare them to a person who is worthy and whom I love, and another person who is stupid and whom I hate. Such being the case, love and hate belong to me while worthy and stupid belong to them. Can my love be called a love of all men, and my hate a hatred of all men? Can the delight I feel be called a flavor of delight, and my anger a flavor of anger? To speak from this point of view, outer and inner have different uses and what belongs to me and others have different names.

The inclusion of manners and customs here connects what was mentioned above with what will be discussed in greater detail in Sections 3 and 4 below. As the host slowly approaches the end of his opening reply to the guest, he points out that a kingdom on the verge of extermination produces music containing nothing but thoughts of grief.[24] Grief, however, is but one of eight feelings ascribed to human beings, feelings that facilitate communication with those around us.[25] And yet, the host notes, these eight feelings are divided into separate classes that prevent them from interacting. In order to illustrate this point, Ji Kang uses the analogy of sweet and bitter flavors. Person one (*jia* 甲) has good moral character and is considered sweet, whereas person two (*yi* 乙) lacks such moral qualities and is labeled bitter. Extending this flavor-based analogy to the world, Ji Kang questions the legitimacy of typecasting all sweet people as good and all bitter people as bad. The reason why comes down to the misuse of names: the feelings of love and hate belong to people internally, unlike traits of personality such as worthy and stupid, which originate outside the body and have no impact on their feelings of love and hate. In other words, the names love and hate cannot touch the reality of things just as the reality of worthy and stupid cannot alter the feelings of love and hate. Thus, outer and inner diverge in use and what belongs to oneself and others diverge in names. How this bears upon music is explained below.

If music should naturally take good or bad as its core, it will have no connection to grief or joy. If grief and joy should naturally take emotions as their releasement, they will have no relation to music. When names and reality are kept apart, everyone notices. What is more, when Jizi visited Lu, he gathered its poems and observed its rituals to separate the Airs and Hymns. Did he actually rely on their sounds to decide if they were good or bad? When Confucius listened to the Shao and praised its singular moderation, causing him to sigh, how was he,

based on its sound alone, able to know the virtue of Yu and Shun before praising its beauty? I have roughly revealed one part of this issue and leave the rest for you to think through on your own.

These concluding lines offer the clearest insight yet into the host's problematization of name and actuality as they pertain to music and emotion. If music does not prioritize the harmony of its notes and sounds but strives to project an image of moral goodness or the lack thereof, it will become disconnected from the natural, perfect harmony of the Dao. Additionally, if joy and grief do not prioritize music as their catharsis but use the heart-mind as their outlet, they will sever their ability to influence music in any meaningful manner. These are two instances of names not matching reality. For Jizi (i.e., Ji Zha) and Confucius, music is selected for its ability to project and reinforce a particular moral standard; the harmony of its notes and sounds is of secondary importance. The aesthetic beauty of music, in other words, can only be recognized once its moral perfection has been granted. Ji Kang, however, is having the host argue that the beauty of music stems from its natural harmony, both within itself, and between it and the external world.[26] Being devoid of morality, sound resonates with listeners by dampening or enhancing their emotional bearing at the time of their encounter. This should be rather obvious, the host implies, which is why he concludes by stating the guest should uncover it for himself.

Section 3

The guest from Qin refuted this: The eight regions have different customs, just as singing and crying have their myriad differences, yet when it comes to feelings of grief and joy, one cannot avoid seeing them. The heart-mind is moved from within and sounds arise from the heart-mind. Although it can support other notes, and express a surplus of sounds, the good examine it via listening so as to comprehend it and avoid errors. In antiquity Bo Ya played his qin and Zhongzi knew what he longed for. The slave-attendant struck the stone chimes and [Zhong] Ziqi understood the grief he was feeling. The people of Lu cried in the morning and Yan Hui knew it was a sign of life departing. On account of these persons, how can someone depend on knowledge gained in the regularity of notes, or test their evidence in a tune's tempo?

The guest objects to the host's response, not in terms of names and reality, but the universal constancy of human feelings. Travel to any of the eight regions of the empire and one will see a wide variety of social and cultural practices; however, what remains constant are the emotions of grief and joy. Even if we are to put aside the names grief and joy, the expectation of these feelings to be present in the appropriate context is

beyond dispute. Externally, tears of grief and joy are indistinguishable, but for the person whose heart-mind has been moved to produce them, the difference is all too clear. This is why the guest pays attention to say that although the heart-mind is touched from within, the sounds heard by the outside world are all traceable to the heart-mind. The *Liji* also spoke of this, saying: "All the modulations of the voice spring from the minds of men. When the feelings are moved within, they are manifested in the sounds of the voice."[27] Mistaking grief for joy and vice versa is not the fault of names but improperly understanding reality. Without attentively listening to the heart-mind, it is easy to be misguided by music. Thus, Bo Ya's 伯牙[28] music was knowable to Zhong Ziqi 鍾子期, who also connected with the slave-attendant playing the chimes; when the people of Lu 魯 wailed aloud, Yan Hui 顏回 shared their sense of loss. The notes and tempo of music are, for the guest, not its core content. Music's core is the heart-mind from which it arises, and since the heart-mind is the core of our feelings, these two are one and the same.[29] In other words, it is impossible for music to be devoid of feeling.

When the heart-mind is sad the body is moved, and when feelings are grieved the sounds that result are sorrowful. This is a natural response which cannot be avoided, hence only a person with spiritual clarity can grasp its essence. Being able to do so, not even an abundance of sound poses a challenge; not being able to do so, not even a scarcity of sound makes it easy. One cannot say, having not met a good listener, that sound lacks an observable principle, or because a place's customs go through many changes, that music lacks grief and joy. You also say it is inappropriate to speak of the worthy person in terms of love and the stupid person in terms of hate. However, the worthy person gives birth to love and the stupid person completes hate, yet it is improper for them both to share the same name.

At the opening of this section, we read how the heart-mind is moved from within and sounds arise from the heart-mind. Now we are told that it is grief that causes such movement, for the grieving heart-mind cannot persist in a body that is outwardly joyous. In the words of the *Liji*: "The internal grief and sorrow produced a change in his outward appearance."[30] Not only does our physical body display what our heart-mind feels, even the sounds it makes expresses this inner sorrow.[31] For the guest, this seems obvious enough yet he feels compelled to point out that to date, only persons with spiritual clarity (*shenming* 神明) have understood the essence (*jing* 精) of this matter. Having this unique insight into the human heart-mind is the purview of the sage (*shengren* 聖人), regardless of the complexity or volume of sound before him; conversely, those people lacking spiritual clarity will be unable to grasp the essence of human feelings even when presented with the bare minimum of sound.

Based upon this, the guest reaches the conclusion that just because someone has not met a listener with spiritual clarity, this cannot be taken as evidence for sound lacking a knowable principle. The guest further argues that owing to regional differences in culture, one cannot make the case that music lacks grief or joy because of such variances. Although grief and joy might be given different names or forms of musical expression according the cultural practices of the region being examined, the guest is not convinced that this proves the absence of a universal, fundamental understanding of what it means to be in a state of grief or joy. Being attentive to the essence of the heart-mind is hence significant for two reasons: it is not only the producer of human emotions, the heart-mind itself is influenced by something outside of itself. The guest will explain what this is in the remaining lines of his response.

What produces grief and joy also has that which it must follow. This results in some sounds making me feel grieved, and some notes making me feel joyous. If grief and joy both come from sound, making them all the more real, how is someone supposed to keep name and reality apart? You also said this: Ji Zha gathered poems and observed rituals to separate the Airs and Hymns, while Confucius listened to the Shao and praised its singular consistency, making him sigh. What words are these? Moreover, when master Xiang played his zither, Confucius envisioned the form of king Wen;[32] *when master Juan played his tune, Ziye recognized its notes as those of a kingdom in peril.*[33] *Would you rather they discussed poetry before reciting it, or studied the rites before offering their opinions? These are instances of a marvelously unique vision that does not rely on prolonged listening to decide if music will bring good or bad fortune, hence previous scribes took them as stories to be passed on with approval. Yet here you are with your trivial modern knowledge, equalizing the visible by setting its limits. Is this not defaming the previous worthies' understanding of the subtle and rejecting the marvelous vision of Confucius?*

Continuing with our analysis of the connection between the heart-mind and spiritual clarity, it is apparent in the concluding lines of the guest's first rebuttal to the host's argument that spiritual insight into the workings of the heart-mind is itself rooted in cultivating a marvelous vision (*miaocha* 妙察) of the Dao. Seeing as it is the guest advocating this stance, the person exhibiting it is none other than Confucius. In his reply to the guest's refutation, the host will sweep away any special ability attributed to Confucius, saying this is merely music's ability to capture what lies within the human heart-mind. Without digressing any further, the guest is claiming that in following what lies outside of itself, the heart-mind internalizes this experience to produce feelings that are thereupon reflected in musical sound. In other words, the guest is of the opinion that feelings and sounds resonate with one another; whether the

sounds come across as sad or happy depends upon the emotional state of an individual. As this resonating is bidirectional, the name and reality of grief and joy will naturally conform, hence music contains emotions.

Not satisfied with the host's reference to Ji Zha and Confucius' listening to the *Shao*, the guest speaks of when music master Xiang played his zither, Confucius did not simply sigh with admiration but envisaged the venerable king Wen! To understand the context of this reference, we can refer to the following passage from the *Huainanzi*: "Confucius studied music under master Xiang and [thereby] understood the will of king Wen of Zhou. This was because upon seeing subtleties, he could know the obvious."[34] Similarly, when music master Juan played his zither, Ziye knew in his heart-mind that the place from which said tune arose was in peril. These examples, the guest says, illustrate that persons with spiritual clarity are able to instantly know the temperament of a song's place of origin, not to mention whether it represents an auspicious (*ji* 吉) or inauspicious (*xiong* 凶) fate, while the common people spend considerable time listening to and judging the emotional position of a given tune. Such being the case, the guest mocks the knowledge of the host for its superficiality and arbitrarily imposing limits on the extent to which feelings can be seen. The host is thus said to deride the sages of old and reject the wisdom of Confucius.

Section 4

The host responded: In your refutation you said: Although singing and crying have a myriad of differences, the good listen to and examine them in order to comprehend them. They do not depend on knowledge gained in regular notes or test their evidence in the tempo of a tune. The followers of Zhongzi and others like them are examples of this. This shows that when a person's heart-mind is grieved, although they might talk, laugh, clap, and dance with others, or when a person feels joyous and slaps his chest and gasps in admiration, their outward forms of expression cannot conceal what lies within, and in doing so, deceive all who observe them by sowing doubts into what they see. You think that just because sound is irregular you can still say when it has grief or joy. You also said: When Jizi listens to sounds, he knows the Airs of the many kingdoms; when master Xiang plays tunes on his zither, Confucius sees the form of king Wen. Given everything you have said, this shows that king Wen's merit, along with the rise and decline of manners and customs, can be reflected in music.

The opening of the host's refutation immediately returns to the issue of names and reality. Reiterating the point made by the guest—that people with marvelously unique vision (*shenmiao dujian* 神妙獨見) can know the emotional content of a song by attentively listening to it—the host argues people can forego the need to compare the names of feelings

to common notes and tempo. However, outward expressions of grief and joy can still conceal feelings in the heart-mind that prove to be the opposite, the effect of which, the host says, is that people doubt the veracity of what they see. And yet, for exceptional persons such as music master Xiang, music is able to convey far more than the base emotions of grief and joy—it can also give voice to a person's merit (*gongde* 功德) and the rise and fall of social traditions. This, however, is not the true significance of music; to discover what that is, we will have to proceed to the next part of the host's response.

The significance of sound can be shared with later generations, and with the skill of masters Xiang or Juan, persons in the future can obtain it. Thus, the three sovereigns and five emperors are not disconnected from the present, so why should it be the case for this matter alone? Such being the case, the tunes of king Wen have regular rhythm and the notes of the Shao and Wu are fixed in number; they cannot be randomly changed or played with surplus sounds. This means that your previous claims about music being irregular, and how Zhongzi could be moved through supposition, are now proven wrong. Is music's lack of regularity and Zhongzi's being moved through supposition in fact true? If not, then Confucius' understanding of the subtle and Ji Zha's careful listening must also be wrong. These are simply the absurd records of vulgar scholars wishing to sanctify their affairs so that others will follow them. Their desire was to mislead the world about the Dao of music hence they did not discuss the principle of what is self-exhausting, turning it instead into something marvelous and hard to know. They resented the fact that they did not meet a unique listener in their time, all the while pining after the men of antiquity in order to make sighs of admiration. This is how they entrapped later generations.

Music is easily transmitted to future generations by creating a written record of its notes and rhythm. The emotional content of a song is also easily shared with future performers and listeners by associating said song with famous legends or historical events. Zhong Ziqi was able to partake in the feelings of Bo Ya and the chime player precisely because he was able to infer from their music the events shaping their composition or performance. The significance of sound, however, does not involve either of these which is why the host says Ziqi, Confucius, and Ji Zha cannot be taken as trustworthy examples of persons who comprehend the Dao of music. Respected as they might be, the musical accounts of these three persons has been, in the words of the host, artificially manipulated by later scholar-officials (*Ru* 儒) in order to enhance the reputation and justify the veneration of the ruling class.

The selfish pettiness of these scholar-officials has earned them the unflattering name of "vulgar *Ru*" (*su Ru* 俗儒), whom Xunzi derided thusly: "He follows his superiors, serves their attendants and favorites,

and respects higher-ranking retainers in a manner like a contented lifelong slave who dares not have any other intentions. Such a person is a vulgar *Ru*."[35] Wang Chong 王充 in his *Lunheng* 論衡 also spoke of the vulgar *Ru*, and while not referring to them as *Ru*, the *Zhuangzi* had this class of individuals in mind when it wrote:

> Those who set about mending the inborn nature through vulgar learning, hoping thereby to return once more to the Beginning; those who set about muddling their desires through vulgar ways of thought, hoping thereby to attain clarity—they may be called the blind and benighted people.[36]

Clearly the *Ru* were seen as misinformed when it comes to both the Dao and the principle of self-exhaustion (*zijin* 自盡). The self-exhausting nature of music takes place on two levels: its notes and its breath. The notes forming a tune naturally exhaust themselves when said tune reaches its completion. Notes are also limited by the type of instrument played and the depth of breath of the performer. If a performer employs breath that is weak, the range and duration of notes put forth will exhaust themselves in rapid order; if their breath is strong, a richer and more extended performance can be had. Thus, while notes are limited by the talent of the heart-mind, and the body is limited in the amount of breath it can contain, cosmic breath is limitless. It thus follows that one cannot use what is limited to express the limitless but this is precisely what the host is accusing the guest of doing by citing examples of persons who turned the ordinary into the astonishing, and the simple into the confounding. Such entrapment, the host writes, came about from the need of the *Ru* to aggrandize their contribution to the world in order to remain relevant in it.

If a person wants to extend categories and discriminate things, they must first seek its natural principle. Once this principle has been fixed, ideas of old can be used to clarify it. However, if a person has not yet embodied it in their heart-mind but instead uses the words of the ancients to verify their claims, then proceeding from this, even a skilled mathematician will not be able to keep track of things. You also refuted me saying: the feelings of grief and joy are like love and hate and their ties to the worthy and foolish. This is why, you say, some sounds make you feel grieved while other notes make you feel joyous. If grief and joy come from music, then music is all the more real. As for the five colors being beautiful or ugly, and the five sounds being good or bad, this is the naturalness of things. As for whether to love or not, the changes in human feelings, and the principle common to all things, everything comes down to these alone. However, these do not exist internally but wait upon things to become realized.

For the host, remaining relevant in the world requires a person to comply with and follow its natural principle. It is interesting that the *Daodejing* does not contain the character for principle (*li* 理), and while the *Zhuangzi* does, it speaks of the principle of heaven (*tian zhi li* 天之理) or that of the myriad things (*wanwu zhi li* 萬物之理), but not natural principle. In the context of the host's argument, this principle, as mentioned above, is related to the self-exhaustion of things and requires harmonizing with the Dao to discover its presence. Extending and discriminating are thus not the tools of the gentleman but are employed by the *Ru* for their own self-aggrandizement. When applied to music, extending and discriminating only impact the physical composition of a tune; they do not bear upon the substance of what is felt by the listeners.

Once the notes and sounds that come together to create music have dispersed after running their course, the principle of naturalness is established. However, unless a person embodies it in their heart-mind, this principle will not bring them closer to the spiritual clarity needed to harmonize with the Dao. Thus, to use the words of the persons of antiquity to justify the claims of the present time (i.e., Ji Kang's) is to rely on an endless number of claims and ideas such that an expert mathematician will be unable to keep track of them all. The phrase "*qiaoli buneng de* 巧歷不能得" is from the *Zhuangzi*: "The one and what I said about it make two, and two and the original one make three. If we go on this way, then even the cleverest mathematician, much less an ordinary man, can't tell where we'll end."[37] We also find a near identical use in the *Huainanzi*: "Of [all the things] between heaven and earth, even a skilled astrologer cannot master all their techniques."[38]

Moving on, the host introduces a pair of terms that are found in many ancient texts: the five colors and five sounds (*wusheng* 五聲). These, along with the five flavors (*wuwei* 五味), were a few of the key criteria by which a thing or person could be judged. Not everyone took these as positive standards however. The *Daodejing*, for example, famously writes: "The five colors make one's eyes blind; the five notes make one's ears deaf."[39] In the *Zhuangzi*, we are told:

> There are five conditions under which the inborn nature is lost. One: when the five colors confuse the eye and cause the eyesight to be unclear. Two: when the five notes confuse the ear and cause the hearing to be unclear.[40]

The host, however, simply declares the five colors and sounds as belonging to the naturalness of things (*wu zhi ziran* 物之自然) and leaves it at that. In the case of humans, the undifferentiated states of color, sound, flavor, and emotion can be considered part of our inborn nature, what causes them to change into visible traits—the act of naming and hence differentiating them—are external events.

Turning to grief and joy, they arise from the gathering of events and first meet in the heart-mind, but due to harmonious sound, they naturally emit themselves. Thus, in my previous discussion, I illuminated their irregularity and now return to this point to rectify their name and signification. One cannot say that the issuing forth of grief and joy because of music resembles the creation of love and hate by those who are worthy and stupid. If this were so, then harmonious sound affects people's heart-mind in a manner similar to sweet wine releasing people's nature. Wine takes sweet and bitter as its core, and drunkenness takes delight and anger as its application. To notice that happiness and sorrow arise from sound and then claim that sound contains grief and joy, this is akin to not being able to see that delight and anger are caused by wine yet declare wine contains the principles of delight and anger.

As was said above, the feelings of grief and joy assemble in the heart-mind and are released upon encountering harmonious sound. The host will have more to say on this in the next section of the essay. Returning to points he made earlier, we are again reminded that grief and joy are associated with love and hate, which are in turn affiliated with worthiness and foolishness. The host advances his argument by drawing upon a new analogy: wine. Wine, in and of itself, lacks emotional content, yet it has the potential to enhance and even release emotions residing in the heart-mind. A wine's flavor, however, does not impact the level of drunkenness a person might experience; that is caused by the wine's alcohol. And yet, what attracts people to drink wine is not the percentage of alcohol but its sweet or bitter taste. The wine's alcohol content is hence its constancy while its flavor is its irregularity. For music, harmony is its constancy while the tempo and rhythm of its notes are its irregularity. In both cases, the countenance that the world sees—be it inebriation or feelings of grief and joy—as a result of one's interaction, has no bearing on the fundamental content of wine and music.

Section 5

The guest from Qin objected: As for observing breath and its expression, this is a common practice in the world. When the heart-mind changes inwardly, a person's outward expression reflects this. This is evident to see hence you do not doubt it. As for music, it arouses breath and the heart-mind is moved to respond, hence sound is released from this change. The heart-mind has its rising and falling and sound also has its ascent and descent. One can see they both serve the same body; how is it that sound alone gives you doubt?

The guest's response that internal changes of breath are naturally reflected externally puts him in agreement with the host. Breath also plays a role in music, with the latter being aroused by the former. Given

the heart-mind is stirred by changes in breath, both rise and fall in synchronicity and this, in turn, forces any sounds being produced to also grow and recede. In light of the fact that the heart-mind, breath, and sound, all share the same body, why, the guest asks, is the host alone in thinking sound lacks grief or joy?

If delight and anger can be seen in a person's expression and looks, then grief and joy should also take form in their music. Music itself must have grief and joy but those who are dim [in hearing] do not recognize it. As for Zhongzi's followers, although they encounter irregular sounds, they cleverly employ their unique vision [to hear past them]. If the blind musician faces a wall, he will see nothing; however, Li Lou was able to make out the tip of an autumn hair at one hundred xun and from this, we can say the bright and dim have their special abilities. One cannot doubt Li Lou's observations by way of their own small measurements, nor guess Zhongzi's intelligent hearing by way of their own common listening, and say these are all the false records of the ancients.

In light of the bond between the heart-mind and breath, and how any changes therein are naturally displayed in a person's complexion, it seems illogical to the guest that music would not contain grief and joy as well. The issue, says the guest, is not that music lacks emotion but that people's senses are too dim (*an* 暗) to distinguish the emotional aspect of music from its sound. Compared to Zhong Ziqi, who was able to be "moved through supposition" (*chulei* 觸類), the blind musician sees nothing when standing before a "wall," while the dim in hearing are oblivious to the emotionality of music once its notes and sounds become complicated. To reinforce his case, the guest mentions Li Lou 離婁,[41] whose spirit-like vision allows him to see the tip of an autumn hair (*qiuhao* 秋毫) from a distance of one hundred *xun*.[42] The tip of a hair, especially when it is from an animal's autumn coat, was a popular example of extreme smallness in ancient China, as this passage from the *Mengzi* 孟子 illustrates: "My sight, while sufficient to scrutinize the tip of an autumn hair, is not sufficient to see a cartload of firewood."[43] The point the guest seems to be making is that people of ordinary abilities should compare themselves to persons having extraordinary abilities. This is a rather flat argument as it presumes these super-abilities are in fact real and that the general populace should accept them on good faith. The host will attack this notion in his rebuttal below.

Section 6

The host replied: In your refutation you said the heart-mind responds to what moves it, and sound is released as a result of this change, hence the heart-mind has its rising and falling just as sound has its ascending and descending. Feelings of grief and joy must, therefore, take shape

in music. Although Zhongzi's followers encounter irregular sounds, they cleverly employ their unique vision [to move past them]. If things are as you say, then Zhuo and Zhi's satisfaction, the hunger at Shouyang, Bian He's grievance, Boqi's sadness, Xiangru's hidden anger, and Buzhan's frightened reverence, will all have thousands of changes and hundreds of different attitudes. If we let each issue forth one chord from a song, or together pluck a few subtle notes on the qin, then in each case, Zhongzi's followers would discover their feelings. If a person listens to sound, is it enough to only hear a few notes instead of many to change their thinking? If a person examines feelings, do they view the great and small as having any real difference? Coming from the same body, one hopes to know them all. However, if sounds come from a whole region, then even Ziye's followers will have to repeatedly play their bamboo pitch pipes and tuning tubes in order to check their notes and know from the southern Airs which kingdoms will flourish and decline, thereby separating the proper Hymns from the licentious songs of Zheng.

Before he discusses the connection between music and the physical body, the host references a number of historical persons who have encountered a wide range of emotions. These cases—masters Zhuo 師濁 and Zhi 師質,[44] Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊,[45] Bian He 卞和,[46] Boqi 伯奇,[47] Xiangru 相如,[48] and Buzhan 不佔[49]—the host says, are all individual examples, while master Ziqi and his followers are capable of knowing the feelings of said individuals by listening to just a handful of notes. If, however, the scope of sound is expanded to include an entire region, then even master Ziye and his followers will be forced to return to their tuning pipes and tubes to verify the notes being heard, otherwise they will have no base of comparison from which to say a kingdom is prospering or in peril, or to declare a song as belonging to the virtuous Hymns of the south or the obscene songs of the northerly kingdom of Zheng 鄭.

Eating bitter food results in hearty laughter while smoke in a person's eyes results in grieved weeping; both produce tears. Even if Diya tastes them, he cannot say that happy tears are sweet and grieved tears are bitter. Everyone knows this. How? Muscles produce water which the flesh turns into sweat; when squeezed, it simply exits. It is not overseen by grief or joy; rather, it is like straining wine through a cloth sack. Although the tool used to squeeze it is not the same, the flavor of wine does not change. Since sounds emerge from the same body, how does it alone contain the principle of grief and joy? As for the Xianchi, Liujing, Dazhang, Shao, and Xia,[50] *they are the perfect music of the former kings. They moved heaven and earth and aroused ghosts and spirits.*

Physiologically, tears can be induced by ingesting bitter (or spicy) food or by getting smoke in one's eyes. In both cases, the feelings that arise are different but the tears are the same. This line of reasoning is identical to what the host said earlier regarding drunkenness from wine. The essential content of tears is water, not grief and joy, yet no one says tears are neutral; they must be either joyous or sorrowful. Ji Kang, however, says this is incorrect. Wine and tears are without emotion so why should music be any different? All three emerge from the same body but in each case, the world perceives the results unevenly. The body, Ji Kang writes, is akin to the cloth colander: depending on the porosity, the texture of the material that emerges will naturally be different. The material itself, however, remains fixed. This is why the perfect music (*zhile* 至樂) of the ancient sage-kings was able to shake heaven and earth and arouse the ghosts and spirits therein for, in being perfect, such music was none other than the sound of the Dao.

If it must be said that there is no music that fails to resemble the body or transmit the heart-mind of its creator, this must be taken as perfect music and blind scribes should not be entrusted with it. It is only when the sages play on their strings and tubes that such elegant notes reach completion. When Shun commanded Kui to first strike the chimes, then gently tap them, the eight notes came together in harmony, and spirits and humans were harmonized. To speak from this, although perfect music must wait for a sage to create it, there is no need for the sage himself to handle it. Why? Music has a natural harmony that is distinct from human emotions. Notes that are harmonious reach completion in metal and stone; sounds that are perfect in harmony come from tubes and strings. Fine threads and hair both have a form that can be examined; hence Li Lou and the blind person have different degrees of success with their clear and dark vision. If one simply mixes water with water, who can tell them apart!

The concept of perfect harmony (*zhihe* 至和) is introduced here for the first time. Unlike harmony (*he* 和, *hexie* 和諧), perfect harmony is the sound of sagely music, examples of which were listed above. Here, the host is not merely speaking of the synchronization between notes and sounds, but the conjoining of music and the human spirit. In doing so, music embodying perfect harmony transforms into a kind of non-music whereby all sounds come together to form the natural music of the Dao. Given the music of the sages reflects the perfect harmony of the Dao, its creation transcends any dependence on the body or heart-mind and is why the court scribes may record its sound but will never be able to duplicate the harmony or rouse the spirit to the same level as the sages. It is for this reason that the host refers to the venerated Shun 舜, who ordered his music master Kui 師夔 to strike and tap the stone chimes so as to arrange the eight musical notes.[51]

Another important term introduced here by the host is "natural harmony" (*ziran zhi he* 自然之和).[52] As with perfect harmony, natural harmony exists independently of human emotions. It is a harmony that exists within the raw material of the instrument—in the stone of the chimes, the bamboo tubes of the pipa, and the strings of the *qin*. Whether the sharp vision of Li Lou or the blindness of the court musician, there is more to the production of music than what the eyes can or cannot see. Thus, if human feelings are contained in the heart-mind, and the heart-mind harmonizes them, it nevertheless differs from the harmony inherent to a musical instrument. However, in order for the musician to combine the two harmonies, they must resonate with one another. This is known as natural harmony and when it resonates with the Dao, it is called perfect harmony.

Section 7

The guest from Qin objected: Although many of my examples might be unclear, which is enough to warrant your criticism, the main principle still has something of merit. It is like when Gelu heard the cries of a cow and knew that three of her offspring had been sacrificed, or when master Kuang blew on his pitch pipes and knew the Airs of the south were not violent and that the Chu army would be defeated. Yangshe's mother heard the baby crying and knew it would be the family's downfall. Each one of these affairs took place in former times, thus they appear together in written records. From this we can infer that rising and declining, auspicious and inauspicious fate, can all be found in sounds and notes. Now, if you want to continue calling them false and deceptive, then the words and records of antiquity must all be rejected, for they are no longer of any use. I remain uncomfortable speaking of such thorough discussions in this way. If you can clarify or show the reason for doing so, helping me bring the two theories together, I would greatly like to hear them.

In this, his third refutation, the guest accepts the fact that his examples are on the weak side but his thesis—that music contains the feelings of grief and joy—is strong. As we have seen multiple times thus far in the essay, historical persons are brought into the discussion to lend the argument further credibility. In this particular section, we are told of three people: Gelu 葛盧,[53] music master Kuang 師曠,[54] and Yangshe's 羊舌 mother.[55] They are reminiscent of Zhong Ziqi discussed in Section 6 above. For the guest, these persons are not only musically insightful, their stories have been handed down since antiquity. Thus, the prosperity and demise of a historical period is no different from the change of fortune experienced by a person; since the notes and sounds comprising music also rise and fall—moments of auspicious and inauspicious fate, if

you will—how can the host say this statement is untrue? If it is, the guest writes, then the entire corpus of historical works and records must also be false. A serious accusation for sure!

This would appear to be nothing more than empty rhetoric in that Ji Kang, as an admirer of Daoism, cannot overlook the ever-changing nature of the world and its myriad entities. Thus, while Ji Kang would uphold Daoism's call to discard (*qi* 棄) knowledge contained in books, it is necessary for him to have the guest say they should be preserved to set the stage for the host's reply in the next section. Although the guest's role in the essay is to act as a sounding board for the host, in the words of the *Daodejing*: "This is how the sage is always good at saving people, so no one is discarded."[56] As much as Ji Kang longed to be free of the stranglehold Confucianism had on the world in his time, he was wise enough to know he could not completely deny its presence.

Section 8

The host responded: If someone can return with the other three corners, he will grasp the meaning and forget the words. Thus, my previous discussion was merely an outline and had no detail. Now you repeatedly annoy me with your refutations. Why should I not try and exhaust them? If the cow from Lu knew her offspring had been sacrificed, and was grieved that her three children no longer existed, she contained her sorrow for many years before wailing to Gelu. This is to have the same heart-mind as a person, the only difference being her animal form. This is something about which I have my doubts. Cows are not the same species as humans and there is no mutual communication between them. If one were to say that birds and animals can speak, and that Gelu received a unique nature allowing him to understand them, this is to discuss their affairs by way of their language and is akin to translating and transmitting an alien language. This amounts to not knowing a person's feelings by examining their music and is hence an invalid criticism.

In his reply to the guest in Section 2 of the essay, the host remarked he would only outline one corner of the issue involving music and emotion, leaving the rest for the guest to figure out. That claim is repeated here, only now the host qualifies it with an expression from the *Zhuangzi*: "once you've gotten the meaning, you can forget the words" (*deyi er wangyan* 得意而忘言).[57] Since this section is concerned with language, Zhuangzi's phrase will prove to be of symbolic importance.[58] Music, in referring to a collective body of notes and sounds, exists as such in name only. To forget the designation "music" is to open oneself to an auditory experience that is full of natural splendor. Forgetting the word music is to thus establish a spiritual connection with the sounds being heard and to listen to them in an equally spiritual manner. Not being able to do so will

result in mental disarray and self-perplexity, as was seen in the *Zhuangzi*'s story of the Yellow Emperor 黃帝 playing the tune *Xianchi* 咸池.

The point the host is working towards is this: while an instrument has the potential to release a range of notes and sounds, the success of doing so depends on the skill of the performer; conversely, the ability of a performer to play harmonious music depends on the quality of the instrument. In both cases, feelings play no role in the sound that is emitted. When it comes to the guest's thesis that humans can identify an animal's feelings by the sound it makes, the host criticizes such an assumption as being anthropomorphic. The mother cow who lost her three calves to sacrificial ritual and mournfully wailed in Gelu's presence is an example of this. The host is not doubting the cow's sorrow but Gelu's ability to recognize it as such: "cows are not the same species as humans" (*niu fei renlei* 牛非人類), the hosts writes, and as such, "there is no mutual communication between them" (*wudao xiangtong* 無道相通).

On the issue of human-animal discourse, the *Lunheng* says the following: "Between birds, beasts, and man there cannot be any intellectual intercourse; how can the former know then whether a state is well ordered or not?"[59] For the host, the question concerns the ability of one thing to know another when both parties are seen to be speaking in an "alien language" (*yiyan* 異言). This not only applies to the story of the cow and Gelu, but the host and guest too! Given the language of music is altogether different from that of the emotions, the guest's insistence on equating them has so far failed to convince the host.

If we call a person with knowledge someone who grasps things upon encountering them, there is nothing they will not know. Allow me to first discuss what I find uneasy about this. I would like to ask if a sage suddenly enters the territory of the Hu, will he know their language or not? My opponent will certainly say he will know it. How are we to explain the principle of his knowing it? I wish to use your reply to establish the region of scrutiny and knowing. Will he [the sage] have a continuous relationship with them [the Hu] in order to know their words? Will he blow on the pitch pipes and play the bamboo tuning tubes in order to examine their notes? Will he observe their behavior and examine their complexion in order to know their heart-mind? This is to know the heart-mind from a person's breath and appearance, and while nothing might be said of them, the sage can still know them. The Dao of knowing does not rely on words. To blow on the pitch pipes and examine its notes is to still know the heart-mind; if the heart-mind is set on a horse but mistakenly calls it a deer, the examiner will certainly know from his saying deer that he meant horse. This is to say, the heart-mind is unrelated to words and words are insufficient to verify what is in the heart-mind. If a person can only know a language by having a continuous relationship with it, this

is like a child learning a language from a teacher yet only knowing they have done so later on. What is there to treasure in such intelligence?

Setting aside Gelu and the cow, the host shifts his discussion to the sage and language. Offering the hypothetical example of a sage who wanders into the territory of the Hu 胡,[60] the guest does not doubt the sage's ability to successfully converse with them; the host, on the other hand, views the situation as analogous to Gelu and the cow. Are we to apply the principle of sound having emotion or is the sage's understanding of the Hu due to some other factor, such as observing their behavior or facial expressions? These approaches, the host says, lets us know a person's heart-mind via their breath and appearance; knowing the latter, however, does not require the use of words. In the words of the host, "the Dao of knowing does not rely on words 知之之道，可不待言也." This is a variation of what we find in the *Zhuangzi*: "Those who know do not speak; those who speak do not know. Therefore, the sage practices the teaching that has no words."[61]

To further emphasize the disconnect between words and feelings (i.e., the content of the heart-mind), the host puts forward the case of a person who mistakenly calls a horse a deer. This example is related to the host's previous statement—that one can know the heart-mind of a person who plays the pitch pipes by examining its notes—in that the names given to each note are not inherent to them and have no bearing on their ability to harmonize. An indirect yet helpful elaboration occurs in the *Zhuangzi*:

> If you'd called me an ox, I'd have said I was an ox; if you'd called me a horse, I'd have said I was a horse. If the reality is there and you refuse to accept the name that men give it, you'll only lay yourself open to double harassment.[62]

The *Zhuangzi* passage, together with the host's remarks, speak to the shaky ground upon which we lay claim to the heart-mind. Whether words or music, neither can sufficiently verify the principle of the heart-mind because language is incapable of affixing to what constantly shifts and transforms.

Language is not something that is naturally fixed and the five regions have different customs; we simply give identical matters different designations. Choosing one name, we use it on behalf of all others. The sage exhausts principle, saying the natural is all that is searchable, with no detail left unilluminated. Should the principle be hidden, although it is near, one will not see it. Thus, the language of a different region cannot be forcibly accessed. To push this idea forward, can Gelu not knowing the cow's cry be anything but trusted? You also criticized me, saying: Master Kuang blew on his pitch pipes and knew the Airs of the south

were not violent because the sounds of Chu are those of the dead. This is something about which I also have doubts. May I ask, when master Kuang blew on his pitch pipes, was it an Air from Chu? They were separated by a thousand li and sound cannot travel that far. If he truly knew the Air from Chu had entered his pitch pipes, then south of Chu are Wu and Yue, while to the north are Liang and Song. If the source could not be seen, how did he know it?

Continuing his attack on the guest, the host pointedly states that language is artificially determined, and although the five regions differ in their customs, similar affairs are given identical names. This, however, does not match the reality on the ground, and was pointed out as early as the *Liji*: "In those five regions, the languages of the people were not mutually intelligible, and their likings and desires were different."[63] To overcome this barrier, identical matters are given different designations and one name to signify all others. The problem with this, at least according to the *Zhuangzi*, is that "name is only the guest of reality."[64] Rather than focus on words to know the heart-mind, the sage endeavors to exhaust principle (*qiongli* 窮理). The principle referred to here is the natural principle of Dao; natural in that it can be sought after, and in seeking it, no minutiae is left in the dark. In other words, there is no place where the Dao cannot be found and no thing that it does not touch. Even when one is close to grasping its principle, it appears concealed (*bi* 蔽) and out of view, yet the Dao always remains in play.

Since the heart-mind cannot be fully understood using language, the words of one place cannot be used to probe the heart-mind of people from another. The same holds true for Gelu and the cries of the cow; the sounds made by a cow do not equate to the sounds made by a person, even when said sounds resemble those of a human in a similar setting. Not only is the host skeptical of Gelu's ability to know the feelings of the cow based on her cries, he is even more doubtful of music master Kuang's claim to know the emotions of the people of Chu by listening to their Airs.[65] Using the vast distance between Chu 楚 and master Kuang's own state of Jin 晋, the host finds it incomprehensible that the songs of Chu could be carried on the wind for such a vast distance. What is more, how does master Kuang know the tunes he is playing are from Chu and not from the southern states of Wu 吳 or Yue 越, or Liang 梁 and Song 宋 to the north? Also, why should the sounds from Chu only reach him and no one else? Why does he not claim to know any of the songs from Chu's neighbors? The answers are found in the next part of his response below.

Where Yin and Yang are frenzied, they turn into wind; with breath moving them both, once they meet the ground they are released. How is what is released in a Chu courtyard able to find its way into Jin? Furthermore, the twelve pitch-pipe tubes divide the breath of the four seasons

such that when the time comes, the movement of breath will cause the pitch pipes to respond, dispersing the dust within. All of these are natural dependencies and do not require human input. Rising and declining equally divides the harmony of the five sounds, conveying their division into hard and soft, yet the pitch pipes are fixed in sound. Although one blows the Zhong Lü in winter, its notes are self-fulfilling and do not diminish. Thus, if the breath of a person from Jin is used to blow a tune without diminishment, how can the wind from Chu contribute to its sound? Since wind is formless, and there is nothing in common between sound and pitch pipes, when it comes to checking the principle [of the Dao], nothing will be found in the wind and pitch pipes. Is this not so? Was master Kuang's broad knowledge, such as knowing how to recognize the form of victory and defeat while wishing to ease the heart-mind of the masses, not reliant upon the spiritual and the subtle in a manner similar to Bo Changqian promising duke Jing a long life?

Reduced to its most elementary components, life is simply a combination of Yin 陰 and Yang 陽; inherently static, Yin and Yang require the energy of breath to move and spawn change. Quite a few ancient texts speak of the breath of Yin and Yang but it would seem the host's observation that breath in a frenetic state becomes wind is this line from the *Zhuangzi*: "The great clod belches out breath, and its name is wind."[66] The breath of the earth is thus one that knows no bounds, so why, the host asks, does the guest argue the sentiments expressed by the songs of Chu can be known by a person in Jin? If sound is a form of wind, and wind the world over has the same source, is it not the case that music master Kuang is superimposing his feelings onto the songs of Chu? Given the four seasons are variants of cosmic breath, and the pitch pipes divide it even further, this dividing and moving of breath does not alter the fact that it remains the same original breath. Such being the case, humans play no role in the transformation of breath into wind, and wind into sound.

Thus, unlike the pitch pipes which are fixed in the sounds they can produce, the rise and decline of breath leads to the five sounds, each of which can be classified as either hard or soft depending on their Yin-Yang affiliation. These five sounds fulfill themselves in being the extant of musical sound—but not the sounds of Nature[67]—hence the breath of an individual in Jin cannot combine with the wind of Chu to enhance the former's musical sound. Not only is this due to the universal nature of breath but the formlessness of wind; formless wind produces formless sound but sound requires an object having form to arise whereas wind arises from what is formless. In other words, pitch pipes are dependent on wind and wind requires breath to move; without breath there is no wind and without wind the pitch pipes cannot create sound. For the host, master Kuang's ability to know and play the Airs of Chu was a

kind of spiritual and subtle knowledge similar to Bo Changqian 伯常騫 promising duke Jing of Qi 齊景公 a long life.[68]

You also criticize me, saying: Yangshe's mother heard the baby crying and knew it would be the family's downfall. I would like to ask once more how she knew this? Did she use a spiritual heart-mind and singular understanding in order to deal with such obscure language? Did she previously hear a crying child which resulted in great disaster, and based on the similarity of today's sound of crying to the earlier one, know it would result in the family's downfall? If her spiritual heart-mind and singular understanding matched this obscure language, it was not something obtained by principle. Although you say she heard the crying, no verification was acquired from the child's sounds. It is as if her prior experience of hearing an evil sound resulted in her knowing the evilness of the present crying. This is to use sound A as a measure for examining crying B. The relationship of sound to the heart-mind is thus like that of the body to the heart-mind. People might have the same form but they differ in their feelings; people might differ in appearance but they are equal in their heart-mind. How can I explain this?

The final example used by the guest in Section 7 was Yangshe's mother and the crying baby. For the host, this once again illustrates the disparity between name and reality. The cries of the child are associated with feelings of sorrow, and should the child's family suffer misfortune at or around the same time, the sound of crying will thereafter be seen as ominous and valid in all places and times. Yangshe's mother knowing the child's cries would lead to disaster is without grounding in reality, hence she is said to possess a spiritual heart-mind (*shenxin* 神心) and singular understanding (*duwu* 獨悟). This is reminiscent of Yan Hui knowing the cries of the people of Lu, or the unique vision of Confucius and Zhong Ziqi. Tears of sorrow might be paired with sounds of crying, but neither can be used to verify the feelings in the heart-mind because the latter follows a principle that gives rise to but is not inclusive of the former. Such is why the host says Yangshe's mother knowing the feelings of a previous sound to judge a present one is to use sound A as a measure for examining crying B. They are not mutually compatible.

What this means is that sound and the heart-mind have a relationship that is akin to the body and heart-mind. While everyone has a heart-mind, their appearance differs; while everyone has a body, their feelings differ. Thus, while music is comprised of sounds and notes, its degree of harmony is not fixed; conversely, harmony entails ordering sounds and notes but whether it qualifies as music is not certain. It would seem, therefore, that there is no easy way to speak of the formlessness of breath and wind when our starting-point is the heart-mind. Similarly, there is no easy way to speak of the harmony of sound when the end-point is

the body. What is needed is an approach that matches the empty with the formless and the full with the infinite. This approach can be found in the natural principle of the Dao.

Sages are equal in their heart-mind and virtue but different in their form. If their heart-mind is the same while their form is different, how can we speak of observing their form to know their heart-mind? Furthermore, how is the mouth arousing breath to produce sound different from the lai and yue being filled with breath in order to make them whistle? Whether the sound of crying is good or evil does not depend on the auspicious or inauspicious fate of the child's mouth. This is like the clear or turbid sounds of the qin and se not relying on the skill or inelegance of the player. The heart-mind can distinguish principles and conduct good dialogue, but its inability to play the flute smoothly is like the musician who is good at measuring his tune but unable to play his instrument in a clear and harmonious manner. The good instrument is not dependent on the subtlety of the musician just as the flute is not harmonious because it follows the clever heart-mind of the performer. Clearly the heart-mind and sound are two things. As they are really two things, to search for another's feelings without stopping to observe their form and appearance is to examine their heart-mind without relying on hearing their music. If someone wishes to examine sound in order to know the heart-mind, will they not miss the mark? The mother from Jin had yet to see the child grow up but simply believed the sound she heard before was verification of the crying she heard today. How is this not the mistake of the ancients that their admirers follow and report?

The story of Yangshe's mother continues to occupy the host's thoughts as he presses the point that the heart-mind and sound are mutually exclusive entities. The air needed to produce sound comes from breath but breath does not imbue the heart-mind with feelings. Using the example of the crying child, its body and sound are compared to a musical instrument and the skill of the person playing it. The child's crying agitates the breath inside its body to produce the sound of crying; this is comparable to a flutist who passes the breath in their body through the instrument. In other words, the child's throat is no different from a flute,[69] yet the child cannot be said to play their throat poorly while the flutist can. When breath is sufficiently excited, it moves; once said movement has run its course, breath returns to its natural state of stillness. Similarly, a child's throat and a flute become excited only when filled with breath; once said breath has been exhausted, throat and flute alike return to their natural state of emptiness.[70]

The stillness of breath and emptiness of the flute are principles knowable to the heart-mind; that the heart-mind cannot play the flute is not the fault of the instrument but its inability to do so harmoniously. Natural

harmony, therefore, transcends skill and cunning to reach the realm of spiritual insight. The truly talented musician thus discards their senses and follows the flow of their breath. Sound and the heart-mind, being two separate things, neither co-arise nor mutually depend on one another; such being the case, how is Yangshe's mother able to know the feelings of the crying child solely based on its sound? Wishing to know the heart-mind by examining its sound is thus to miss the mark, yet it was a mark established by the people of antiquity and erroneously followed and praised by their admirers. The assumption of a universal connection between sound and emotion, regardless of time and place, is what the host objects to, not the persons or events that are cited as evidence of their interaction.

Section 9

The guest from Qin refuted this: I hear the defeated person feels no disgrace in fleeing and so stays complete. My heart-mind is unsatisfied with this and I have returned to this matter in my refutation. I will now proceed to the remainder. If a placid person listens to the zheng, di, or pipa, their form becomes irritable and their will oversteps its bounds. If they hear the notes of the qin and se, their body becomes tranquil and their heart-mind unhurried. Using the same instrument, the effect of each tune differs yet a person's feelings change accordingly. To play the sounds of Qin, one will sigh with admiration and have a deep feeling of excitement; playing the sounds of Qi and Chu, their feelings become one and their thoughts concentrated. Indulging in a wonderful tune, happiness is released and desires are satisfied. Thus, the heart-mind is changed by sound and there are many cases like this. If restlessness and quietude come from sound, then why impose a limit on grief and joy? To simply say nothing is unmoved by the music of perfect harmony, and that we should rely on the sounds of the great sameness and attribute their numerous changes to human feelings, how is this not a case of not knowing that while also not understanding this?

To counter the host's remarks, the guest puts aside the example of Yangshe's mother and turns his attention to the ability of particular musical instruments to positively or negatively change a person's emotional bearing. Specifically, the host states that a docile person, literally someone who is peaceful and harmonious (*pinghe* 平和) listens to the *zheng* 箏, *di* 笛, or *pipa* 批把,[71] they will physically turn irritable while their will oversteps its bounds; in comparison, the *qin* 琴 and *se* 瑟[72] have a calming effect on people. As for why these instruments impact people in this way, the host will say in his reply below. For the guest, what matters is that different tunes played on the same instrument lead to different effects and that the listener's feelings change accordingly. Had the

listener's feelings remained the same for each song played, the guest's argument would be disproved. Selectively choosing tunes that are known to produce, or enhance, a particular emotional response, the guest is not doing a great deal to further his thesis; he is content to repeatedly state that particular regions (Qin, Qi, and Chu) are famous for sounds of one order while other regions (Zheng) are known for sounds of an altogether different order. Thus, if calmness and agitation can be attributed to sound, why should grief and joy be treated differently? This, the guest declares, is a matter of not knowing this (calmness and agitation) and not understanding that (grief and joy).

Section 10

The host replied: Your refutation states the zheng, di, and pipa make people irritable and [their will] oversteps its bounds. You also said the effects of each tune differs and feelings change accordingly. These are indeed what causes people to be moved in a consistent manner. The pipa, zheng, di, have small spaces and high sounds, producing many changes and a rapid rhythm. With high sounds managing a rapid rhythm, a person's body becomes irritable and the will oversteps its bounds. It is similar to wind chimes startling the ear, and bells and drums frightening the heart-mind. Thus, to hear the notes of drums and sheaths is to think of generals and commanders; it appears that music contains the great and small, moving people violently or quietly. When it comes to the body of the qin and se, they have wide gaps and their notes are low with very little change, producing a clear sound. When low notes manage what has very little change, if one does not empty their heart-mind and listen quietly, one will be unable to exhaust the extreme of clear harmony. This is why the body is quiet and the heart-mind calm. The effect of each tune differing is like the notes made by different instruments. As tunes from Qi and Chu contain many repetitions, a person's feelings become one, and with little changes in the tune, their thoughts concentrate. Notes of a wonderful tune are ladled out in many beautiful sounds and meet the five tones in harmony, having a body that is rich and an effect that is broad. Thus, the heart-mind serves many principles. When the five tones meet, happiness is released and desires are satisfied. All of these, however, show that music's form is either simple or complex, high or low, good or bad, while human feelings react as restless or quiet, concentrated or dispersed. It is like a person who indulges in sightseeing in the capital: their eyes are overwhelmed and their feelings scattered; however, should they stay behind and examine the tunes, their thoughts turn quiet and their appearance becomes appropriate. This means the body of music is either comfortable or painful. When a person's feelings respond to sound, they stop at what is restless or quiet.

As mentioned above, the host now explains the specific ways the *zheng*, *di*, and *pipa* alter our feelings: the space between their notes is small, creating high-pitched sounds with many changes and in rapid order. What makes people agitated and over-ambitious when listening to these instruments are their high-pitched sound and fast rhythm. For the host, these instruments are akin to someone suddenly striking a wind chime (*lingduo* 鈴鐸) that startles our ears, or the banging on bells and drums that frightens our heart-mind. As for why bells and drums make us fearful, the *Lunheng* says: "In important and urgent matters bells and drums are used, in small and indifferent ones, jingles and fives."[73] For the host, the sound of beating drums is not comforting but makes people think of generals and commanders.[74] Thus, when it comes to the sound of wind instruments, and bells and drums, it is either great or small, violent or peaceful, the result of which are jolted ears and a quaking heart-mind. Switching from high-pitched, rapid sounds to the lower register of the *qin* and *se*, instruments whose tonal changes are few due to the sizable gaps between them, a clear and harmonious sound is released that quiets the body and calms the heart-mind.

Every tune played, every time it is played, is perceived differently by listeners.[75] Those from the states of Qi and Chu, due to their high frequency of repetition and little tonal change, unite and concentrate people's thoughts. Listeners are lulled into a transformative state in which the five notes perfectly harmonize to form a collectivity of sound that is both profound and broad. As it sways and swells, alights and dims, songs of perfect harmony do not cater to the needs of a single emotion but touch all of them simultaneously. Such is why the host proclaims that the form of music is simple or complex, high or low, and good or bad, while human feelings react as restless or quiet, concentrated or dispersed. Neither grief nor joy are to be found because our feelings stop at what is either restless or quiet. The analogy given by the host is of a person visiting the capital. At first their senses are overloaded and their feelings disperse in all directions but after acclimatizing themselves, their senses return to normal and their feelings settle down. This, the host says, is evidence of music's ability to comfort or pain us.

The effect of a tune differs each time and the position of a person's feelings change as a result, just like flavors have their different beauty but the mouth always recognizes them. The five flavors have their myriad differences but find great sameness in their beauty; although the changes in a tune are many, they find great sameness in their harmony. Beauty contains what is sweet and harmony contains what is joyous, and although feelings follow a tune, they are exhausted by the region of harmony. The response of the mouth to beauty is thus cut-off from the region of sweetness. Where in their midst does one find grief and joy? The feelings of people, however, are different, with each person learning

from their own understanding and then expressing whatever they feel. If one says that peace and harmony, grief and joy, are all appropriate to us, then nothing exists beforehand which can be released, hence one is in the end left with restlessness and quietude. If all one has is released, then the core lies within oneself and is not the result of peace and harmony. Speaking on account of this, restlessness and quietude are the results of sound, and grief and joy are the core of feelings. Since one cannot see the restless and quiet response of sound, one cannot say grief and joy come from music. Furthermore, while music can be violent or quiet, violence and quietude share the same harmony, thus whatever harmony moves will be self-released. How can I explain this?

In order to inject new vigor into his argument, the host draws a comparison between feelings of the heart-mind and flavors of the mouth. Just as the heart-mind is touched differently with each listening of a song, so too does the mouth process flavor differently with each eating of a meal. If the heart-mind can adjust its disposition while listening to a song, the mouth is equally capable of knowing the beauty of a meal despite the simplicity or complexity of flavors therein. Thus, the heart-mind and mouth are both rooted in the great sameness (*datong* 大同) of things. What is this "great sameness"? According to the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, "heaven, earth, and the myriad things are like the body of one person; they are called the 'great identity.'"[76] The *Zhuangzi* tells us that the sage "wander[s] in the beginningless. He passes in and out of the boundless and is ageless as the sun. His face and form blend with the great unity, the great unity that is selfless."[77]

Beauty of the mouth includes the flavor of sweetness just as harmony of the heart-mind includes the emotion of joy. While feelings reside in the heart-mind, harmony is what exhausts them; while the beauty of the five flavors resides in the mouth, only harmony can exhaust them. In other words, the mouth and beauty exist in a relationship that is distinct from that of the mouth and sweetness. However, human emotions are not akin to flavors of the mouth in that individuals acquire their own knowledge and convert it into feelings. The host elaborates on this by saying if peace and harmony, and grief and joy, are appropriate to us, that is, they are proper to our inborn nature, there will be no feelings left to release, leaving us only with the states of restlessness and quietude. It is on account of these internal states, not our outward harmony, that our feelings are controlled. In other words, restlessness and quietude come about from hearing sound whereas grief and joy reside in the heart-mind and reveal themselves only after it has been agitated or pacified. These expressions of our inner feelings are themselves without substance; we can think of them as placeholders that the feelings of grief and joy temporarily occupy. Such being the case, the guest cannot prove his thesis that sound contains feeling. Furthermore, while sound is either

violent or quiet, these characteristics are rooted in the singular harmony of the Dao, and whatever the harmony of the Dao touches, it is released of its own accord.

When guests come together and fill the hall, drunk with wine and playing the qin, some will be joyful and happy while others will be sad and weep. They were not brought close to grief by that, or led to joy by this. No changes were made to the notes being played, yet happiness and sorrow both resulted. Is this not like the wind blowing differently on the myriad things? If we say only delight and anger lack a core, we should also say grief and joy are without a core, hence happiness and sorrow appear together. If one uses notes that are biased and fixed, containing the same type of sounds, then all that is released and illuminated would have its own division. How can a person concurrently manage these collective principles such that there is a complete releasement of the various feelings? Speaking from this, music takes peace and harmony as its body but moves things in an irregular manner. The heart-mind and human will take talent as its core and both will be moved to releasement. Thus, the relationship of sound to the heart-mind is similar to different roads and paths: they do not overlap. How can a person infect the great harmony with happiness and sorrow and link them with the empty names of grief and joy?

The host frames the above in the context of a banquet. Guests attend and are entertained by the host with wine and music. Whatever mood the guests were in before the banquet, it will change during and after it has concluded. The heart-mind of the guests is not altered, nor are the reality of the wine and music. Each of remains true to what they are. The wine causes some people to become intoxicated while others stay sober; of those affected by wine, the amount required to produce drunkenness varies. However, the degree of consumption and its resultant effect on the person drinking it is not determined by the wine. The same holds true for music: some listeners will feel happy while others will be overcome with sorrow. Despite the notes being the same, the outcome differs. The host says this is a case of "the wind blowing differently on the myriad things" (*chui wan butong* 吹萬不同), an expression borrowed from the *Zhuangzi*: "Blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself—all take what they want for themselves, but who does the sounding?"[78] Thus, delight, anger, grief, and joy are all without a distinct core and so appear concurrently.

Using notes of a fixed and biased nature, the sounds emanating from them will be identical in each case. As each group of determined notes and sounds are received by the listener, whatever feelings are released in the process will also be fixed and biased, making overlap impossible. How then, the host asks, can a person manage the collectivity of

emotional principles such that their complete releasement is realized? The answer is that music adopts peace and harmony as its body while emotionally touching things differently; on the other hand, the heart-mind and human will are emotionally touched and hence released when they adopt talent as their core. In other words, the relationship between sound and the heart-mind is like that of different roads and pathways: they do not overlap. What is needed, therefore, is a method to weave the various feelings together, just as the five notes are intertwined in ultimate harmony (*zhihe* 至和) to create music of the highest order. Whether this harmony is referred to as ultimate or great (*taihe* 太和), it is none other than the natural principle of the Dao. Given this, how can the guest justify his argument which serves only to infect (*ran* 染, literally to dye or stain) the harmony of the Dao with the human feelings of happiness and sorrow, or link these feelings to the empty names (*xuming* 虛名) that are grief and joy?

Section 11

The guest from Qin objected: In your discussion you said: Violent and quiet notes each have the same harmony, and of all that is moved by harmony, nothing fails to release itself. Thus, drunk with wine and playing the qin, happiness and sorrow both appear. This is to say strong feelings are biased and first establish themselves internally. One thus carries in their breast thoughts of happiness and values them when hearing sad notes, just as how a person who is internally sad will be moved when encountering a joyful sound. Music itself naturally determines grief and joy but sound changes slowly and cannot be hurried, nor does it change upon meeting its opposite. Strong and biased feelings arise whenever they meet something and is why grief and joy respond at the same time. Although the two feelings are seen together, how does this harm the fixed principle of music?

In his response, the guest continues to be skeptical about the simultaneous arising of grief and joy. If a person is drunkenly playing the *qin*, strong feelings such as grief and joy are the first to take hold of the heart-mind. Despite the music enhancing to the point of outward expression one particular feeling, the opposite remains present in the heart-mind. Thus, a person can have happy thoughts while hearing a sad tune and sad thoughts when listening to a happy tune. For the guest, this can happen because music not only determines its initial orientation towards grief or joy, feelings can overcome the temptation to turn into their opposite due to the slow pace of change that takes place in sound. This means that while grief and joy arise together, only one of them is plucked into the light by music while the other stays hidden. Such is how the fixed principle (*dingyi* 定理) of music avoids being harmed.

Section 12

The host responded: In your refutation you said: Grief and joy naturally determine their sound but strong feelings that are biased cannot be quickly changed. Thus, someone who carries with them feelings of sorrow will still feel grief when encountering a joyous sound. If all is as you say, then sound has its fixed divisions. Suppose a person repeatedly plays Wailing Deer, a joyful sound, and a sorrowful person encounters it; although the sound changes slowly, it cannot change his feeling into a happy one, so how can it make him feel even more grieved? It is like the heat from a single lamp; although it cannot warm a room, it would not, on the other hand, make the room colder. Fire does not make cold abundant and music is not a tool to increase grief. Plucking strings in a banquet hall, both happiness and sorrow result and this is clearly due to ultimate harmony releasing what is blocked by guiding a person's feelings. Thus, through the arousal of external things, a person can exhaust their selfhood.

The notion that music selects which of the primary emotions will be outwardly displayed while preserving the others in the heart-mind is the target of the host's short reply here. Drawing on the analogy of a lamp from the *Zhuangzi*,[79] the host compares the heat it gives off to playing "Wailing Deer" (*luming* 鹿鳴): this tune is a happy one, yet the sad person who hears it will continue to feel sad even though the sound of the song changes slowly. The tune does not convert sadness into joy nor does it further contribute to the listener's sadness, turning it into grief. Music, therefore, acts like the heat from a lamp: it is not enough to warm an entire room by itself, which would require additional lamps, but it certainly does not make the room colder than what it would be without the lamp's presence. In light of this, the host states that fire does not increase the level of cold just as music does not increase one's level of grief. The reason why happiness and sorrow concurrently arise when hearing a song is because ultimate harmony sets free what is blocked by guiding our feelings (*daoqing* 導情). Such is how people are able to exhaust their selfhood whenever they are aroused by external things.

In your criticism you said: Strong and biased feelings arise whenever they meet something and is why grief and joy respond at the same time. To speak of grief, some see a stool and staff and weep while others see a cart and robes and feel sad. It follows that they were moved by the people they lost while their things continue to exist, and are pained that such events have been made clear while the forms of those lost are now hidden. In all of these instances, everything has its own self-causing and it is not that grief is born when encountering a place,

later appearing as tears when one is sitting on the mat. Now without a stool or staff to move them, how are people who listen to harmonious sounds and flow with tears not an example of whatever harmony moves being self-released?

Continuing with his criticism of the co-arising of grief and joy, the host introduces two further image sets: stool and staff (*ji zhang* 機杖), and cart and robe (*yu fu* 輿服). The stool and staff induce weeping in that they are a reminder of human finitude: "In going to take counsel with an elder, one must carry a stool and a staff with him."[80] The cart and robes also offer such a reminder but in the form of a funerary procession; both are indications of people being moved by those they have lost (*renwang* 人亡), and pained by the display of such loss while their former forms are now hidden. Such feeling is made all the more explicit in this passage from the *Xunzi*:

> When my lord enters the ancestral temple and ascends from the stairs on the right, looking up, you see the beams and rafters, looking down, you see the tables and mats. The implements remain, but the people who owned them are no more. If my lord uses this to ponder sorrow, then how would understanding of sorrow not come?[81]

What these examples reveal is that things are self-causing and grief does not arise because of an external encounter, the feelings from which are kept in the heart-mind and only later released as tears. Ji Kang also debates Ruan Kan on this topic as it applies to the location of a person's residence in the aptly titled essay *Residences are not Auspicious or Inauspicious, One must Assist Life*. Without things to physically remind us of our grief, how can one argue against the notion that harmony moves things to self-releasement?

Section 13

The guest from Qin refuted this: In your discussion you said: Drunk with wine and playing the qin, happiness and sorrow both appear. I wished to penetrate these words and so I said that biased feelings are first moved by things and then released. Now I will speak of what is concealed in my heart-mind and try to explain it. If the heart-mind of a person is not happy then it will be sad, and if it is not sad then it will be happy. This is the vast realm of feelings and the human will. However, crying is the sadness of pain while smiling comes from happiness. When someone listens to the tunes of Qi and Chu, we only see grief and tears on their face and not the appearance of laughter or a smile. This must mean the tunes of Qi and Chu take grief as their body. Thus, whomever is moved by these tunes responds to their measure. How is it simply due

to frequent repetition and little change [of notes] that feelings are made one and thoughts are concentrated? If this actually results in tears then music contains grief and joy, which is undeniably knowable.

In this brief rebuttal, the guest's argument appears to be wilting. It seems his last recourse is to point to the physical body and the various ways it projects emotion. Stating the obvious, that a sad heart-mind produces tears while a happy one leads to smiles, the guest uses this fact to generalize the music of Qi and Chu as inherently grief-based, since everyone who hears it only cries and feels sad. It cannot, he stresses, be due to the low-pitched sound and slow rhythm of the instrument. The fact that people shed tears when listening to the songs of Qi and Chu is proof enough for the guest that sound contains grief and joy. The host will remain unconvinced.

Section 14

The host responded: Although human feelings are moved by grief and joy, grief and joy can each amount to a lot or a little. The extreme of grief and joy does not have to reveal itself in the same way. When grief is small it appears as ruin; when sorrow is deep it appears as weeping. This is the domain of grief. When happiness is small it appears as a pleased face; when joy is extreme it results in laughter. This is the principle of joy. How can I explain this? When members of a person's own family are safe and at ease, tranquility naturally appears, as if everything is self-obtained. However, in a dangerous situation from which they barely escape harm, the clapping cannot keep up with the dancing. To speak on account of this, dancing is not as good as what is self-obtained. How can it be otherwise?

Here, the host follows the guest's lead in emphasizing the physicality of emotions; however, unlike the guest's blanket classification, the host argues there can be measured responses to music that may or may not entail the full extent of what the heart-mind is feeling.[82] While grief and joy can appear in varying states of expression, extreme cases cannot: minor grief is ruinous while profound sorrow results in sustained weeping; minor happiness leads to a delighted face while extreme joy results in prolonged laughter. To put this into terms the guest can relate to, the host uses the following analogy: if a person's family has a life of ease and comfort, they will have an air of calmness and self-satisfaction; however, should a person's family be caught in a dangerous situation and barely escape with their lives, their celebratory dancing will mask the fear they felt earlier. Of these two forms of joy, only the self-acquired is authentic.

Although the ultimate of smiles and laughter comes from feelings of happiness, they result from the principle of selfhood and are not tools to naturally respond to music. This means that when joy responds to sound, it takes self-obtainment as its core; when grief merits a response, the result is weeping. In weeping, a person's form moves and this can be felt. In self-obtaining, the spirit is united and does not change. Thus, one observes the differences but does not know their sameness; one separates the external but has yet to examine the internal. How can smiles and laughter not appearing with music be limited to the tunes of Qi and Chu? You have not sought joy in the region of what is self-obtained, or that the lack of laughter and smiling indicates a body of grief belonging to Qi and Chu. How is this not knowing grief and not understanding joy?

Despite happiness producing smiles and laughter, these responses belong to the principle of selfhood and as such, should not be employed as tools (*ju* 具) to respond to music. Thus, when joy encounters sound and harmonizes with it, the guiding principle is not found in the sound but in the natural exhaustion of joy. Conversely, when grief encounters sound and harmonizes with it, the guiding principle lies in the natural exhaustion of grief, which is weeping and shaking. These are two elements of the Daoist principle of selfhood.[83] By preserving one's spirit and not see it dispersed by external things, one can avoid the mistake of the guest: take note of the differences between things without knowing their sameness such that external traits are separated from one another without consideration of those found internally. In other words, outward displays of grief can be deceptive, which is why the music of Qi and Chu should not be labeled as exclusively sorrowful. To say otherwise is to demonstrate an understanding of joy but not grief.

Section 15

The guest from Qin asked: Confucius said: For reforming manners and changing customs, nothing is better than music. If things are as you discussed, and among the hundreds of kinds of grief and joy not one belongs to sound, how are we to succeed in reforming manners and changing customs? The men of antiquity were discrete with their use of resplendent Airs and repressed sounds that were delightful to the ear, hence the saying: discard the sounds of Zheng and stay away from flatterers. These may be the notes of Zheng and Wei[84] *but we strike the stone chimes to unite spirits and men. I dare ask about the body of Zheng and the Hymns: Do they represent the extreme of abundance and evil, and so are used to successfully reform manners and change customs? I would like to hear more of this to remove my doubts.*

In his final opportunity to prove that music contains grief and joy, the guest draws upon one of Confucianism's most venerated of texts, the *Xiaojing* 孝經, which says: "For reforming manners and changing customs, nothing is better than music."[85] If a text such as this acknowledges the role of music in the management of human behavior, who is the guest to argue otherwise? How was it that the ancient sage-kings devised ritual as an emotional release but neglected to include music? The answer is they did not. How was it that when the ancient sage-kings invented music, they overlooked the need to moderate human feelings so as to keep the people agreeable and united? The answer is they did not. Such being the case, the guest writes, the ancients stated that the sounds of the state of Zheng should be eliminated and flatterers must be avoided. Indeed, such sentiment can be found in texts as early as the *Lunyu*: "Prohibit the tunes of Zheng, and keep glib people at a distance—for the tunes of Zheng are licentious, and glib people are dangerous."[86] Be this as it may, even the music of Zheng was designed to bring together the realm of the spirits and that of humanity; however, this would appear to be insufficient to reform manners and change the customs of those living outside of Zheng, hence the guest entreats the host for one final clarification, to which he is all too happy to provide.

Section 16

The host replied: To speak of reforming manners and changing customs, this must be done after a period of decline and evil. The ancient kings received the heavenly principle of things, revered teachings that were simple and easy, and were driven by a style of governance based on non-deliberate action. The ruler was quiet above and his ministers concurred below, things were mysteriously transformed and indiscernibly penetrated, and heaven and humanity united in peace. Species that decay and wither were submersed in a life-giving spiritual fluid, while throughout the six directions, everything bathed in the vast flow and were thereby cleansed of their dirt and dust. The collective forms of life were hence secure and at ease, bringing themselves great fortune. In silence they followed the Dao, cherished loyalty and embraced righteousness, unaware of why things were this way. Satisfied by a harmonious heart-mind inside, their harmonious breath was seen on the outside. Thus, they sang to express their will and danced to announce their feelings.

This final reply by the host also serves as a conclusion to the entire essay. It commences with a comparison between "reforming manners and changing customs" and Daoist cosmogony. Since reforms are normally carried out after a period of instability or decline, we can say it is similar to the quiet stabilization of the universe following its chaotic beginning. Using their knowledge of the heavenly principle of things, the

sage-kings of antiquity established teachings that were simple and easy, and governed by way of an equally simple and easy mechanism: non-deliberate action (*wuwei* 無為). Daoism is famous for employing this form of statecraft—"because he [the sage] acts without conscious effort, nothing remains ungoverned"[87]—but it is also raised in Confucianism: "Is Shun not an example of someone who ruled by means of *wuwei*?"[88] Thus, the host continues, with the ruler not interfering in the lives of the people, he resorts to quietude and his ministers follow suit. Left to their own devices, the people and things of the world are mysteriously transformed and indiscernibly penetrated (*xuanhua qiantong* 玄化潛通) by the Dao, peacefully uniting heaven and humanity in the process. In the words of the *Daodejing*: "In antiquity, he who was good at being a leader was perfectly in step with mystery in all its subtlety and profundity; so recondite was he that it was impossible to understand him."[89]

Returning to cosmogony, the host notes that after their creation, living things—those that decay and wither (*kugao* 枯槁)—were covered in a life-giving spiritual fluid (*yu ling ye* 育靈液). This fluid can be understood in one of two ways: as the cosmological breath of the Dao, or as that belonging to a kind of cosmic-placenta. One would be tempted to say the latter since the host is speaking of organisms that decay and wither, evidence for which can be found in the *Daodejing*: "While alive, humans are soft and pliable, but, when dead, they are hard and stiff. While alive, plants, trees, and all the other myriad things are also soft and fragile, but, when dead, they are dried up and withered."[90] However, the first interpretation, a physical expression of breath, is also valid: "Men of haggard-hermit looks reach out for fame."[91] Regardless of which reading one adopts, the collective beings of the universe were bathed in the vast flow (*hongliu* 鴻流) of the Dao's breath, ridding them of their dirt and dust and bringing comfort and fortune to their lives. Wanting to show their self-satisfaction and harmony, they voiced their will in song and displayed their feelings in dance.

Afterwards they picked sections from texts, illuminated them in the form of Airs and Hymns, transmitted them using the eight notes, and perceived in them the great harmony [of the Dao]. Guiding their spirit and breath, they nourished them, and upon receiving their feelings and inborn nature, caused them to be illuminated. With their heart-mind and principle in mutual accordance, breath and sound responded to one another. United, they came together, which aided their beauty. Thus, happy feelings triumphed and were seen in metal and stone, and so wide comprehension and great illumination was revealed in their music. Continuing from this, the multitude of kingdoms had the same customs and whose fragrant prosperity aided their luxury, giving them the scent of an autumn orchid. Though they did not seek it they were sincere, and though they did not plan it, their affairs reached completion and

they majestically loved one another. It was like unfolding a colorful tapestry to observe its glorious presentation. Nothing is more abundant that the flourishing of the great Dao; nothing is more evident that the accomplishments of the great peace. Thus it is said: For reforming manners and changing customs, nothing is better than music. No matter the form music takes, the heart-mind is the core. Thus, the music that is soundless is the father and mother of the people.

With the advent of song and dance as emotional outlets, the sages of antiquity sought to formalize this convention by adding select textual passages to the activities, which became known as Airs and Hymns, and used the eight notes to help spread these songs throughout the land. In this way, a great harmony was achieved between music and the heart-mind of the people. This developmental picture of music, especially the inclusion of great harmony, is reminiscent of the following account given in the *Zhuangzi*:

> Perfect music must first respond to the needs of man, accord with the reason of heaven, proceed by the five virtues, and blend with spontaneity; only then can it bring order to the four seasons and bestow a final harmony on the ten thousand things.[92]

With the great harmony of the Dao made known, the ancients guided their spirit and breath to properly nourish them, resulting in the bestowal of feelings and their inborn nature.

From this, their heart-mind accorded with the natural principle of things and is why breath and sound could respond to one another in unison, furthering their beauty. On the notion of mutually aiding one another, we are told in the *Yijing* 易經 that "the sages had the means to perceive the activities taking place in the world, and, observing how things come together and go smoothly, they thus enacted statutes and rituals accordingly."[93] Musically, however, the sages of antiquity strove to produce sounds that would lead to joyous feelings, and given the challenges of doing so, their music possessed a broad knowledge of and insight into human nature. As it spread to other states, said music enriched their customs, giving them the scent of an autumn orchid.

Being enriched in such a manner, the people were naturally sincere without trying to be so, their affairs reached fruition without purposeful planning, and feelings of mutual love became commonplace. The *Xunzi* also spoke of this *wuwei*-like self-completion: "That which is accomplished without anyone's doing it and which is obtained without anyone's seeking it is called the work of heaven."[94] Our host, however, is not arguing for a Confucian portrayal of the early world but one that signifies and embellishes the wonderment of the Dao: "It was like unfolding

a colorful tapestry to observe its glorious presentation." If one wishes to reform manners and change customs, the host writes, there is no better way than music because music captures the flourishing of the great Dao (*dadao* 大道) and the accomplishments of the great peace (*taiping* 太平). As the Dao is without form, it is soundless; as the Dao lacks nothing, it accomplishes everything. In this way, the soundless music of the Dao serves as the father and mother of the people.

Arriving at the harmonization of the eight notes, people are pleased by them and we refer to them collectively as music. However, reforming manners and changing customs is not found in this. Music that is harmonious cannot be the result of human feelings. This is why the people of antiquity knew that feelings cannot be freed while repressing those that might escape; they knew that desires should not be allowed to reach their limit, hence they used themselves as examples to be followed. They made rites that can be respected and established music as a guide. Just as the mouth does not exhaust flavor, music does not reach the limit of its notes; estimating the proper beginning and end, they settled on the middle of what is worthy and stupid, taking this as their rule, giving the distant and close the same customs that could be used without exhaustion. From this they connected loyalty and trust, setting them as not to be changed. Thus, village schools and private academies all followed these changes. Silk and bamboo coexisted with dishes and platters, plumes accompanied bowing and retreating, and correct words and harmonious sounds together issued forth. If a person is going to listen to this sound they must hear these words; if a person is about to observe this appearance they must revere this ritual.

Humans cannot hear the soundless music of the Dao and so the ancient sages harmonized the eight notes in order to give people joy, however, reforming manners and changing customs is not the product of such ordering. Given this, how can harmonious music come about because of human feelings? It cannot, which is why the host argues the ancient sages knew some feelings could not be released while others were simultaneously suppressed, that desires taken to their limit were dangerous, and so they made themselves models of ritual conduct and musical expression for others to follow. On using ritual as a measure for people's actions, the *Xunzi* tells us: "Ritual is that which the ruler of men uses as the yardstick and test for his various subjects, and then the classes of people are marked out completely."[95]

The host will have much more to say about ritual below. Here, his aim is to elucidate how music can guide others. Returning to his earlier example of taste and the mouth, the host compares the inexhaustibility of flavor to the limitlessness of musical notes.[96] Just as the mouth recognizes primary flavors without being taught what they are, so too does the musician

know the core range of notes for each instrument. Avoiding extremes, the ancients created tunes of a reasonable length, selected those of middle intelligence to perform them, and ensured that customs would be uniform and used without end throughout the different states. And so, manners and customs came together in unison. Silk and bamboo were now seen with dishes and platters, plumes attended acts of bowing and retreating, and correct words were uttered to complement harmonious sounds.

Ritual resembles the ascending and descending of a guest and their host, and how only afterwards do they exchange toasts. Thus, regulating words and speech, the rhythm of music, the ceremony of bowing and yielding, the number of starts and stops in a procession, the co-dependency of advancing and retreating, these are all one body. The ruler and his ministers use them at court while nobles and commoners use them at home. We practice them as children and do not neglect them as adults. With a heart-mind at ease and human will set, the good is followed on a daily basis and only then is it approached respectfully, supported for a long time without change, the result of which is we are changed and completed. This was what the former kings meant by using music. Thus, at court festivities and private banquets, fine music must exist. This is why when court scribes examined the flourishing and decline of manners and customs, they relied on the joy of musicians, for they expressed them in pipes and strings, were blameless when speaking about them, and knew which ones to prohibit upon hearing them. This was what the former kings meant by using music. Regarding the sounds of Zheng, it is supremely marvelous music. Marvelous notes move people, just as a beautiful face confuses the will. To indulge in joy or be muddleheaded by wine, it is easy to lose one's livelihood. If not the ultimate person, who else can remain in control?

With manners and customs coming together as ritual and music, they could now be enacted across all levels of society. Host and guest engage in a musical dance of ascending and descending the outer steps of a hall, bowing and standing upright, raising and lowering their wine cups in successive toasts. The picture painted by the host can be derived from at least two early sources. In the *Liji*, we are succinctly told: "The ascending and descending, the positions high and low, the wheelings about, and the changing of robes, are their elegant accompaniments."[97] The *Xunzi* offers a much richer description, the essence of which is:

> They descend to remove their shoes and ascend again to sit. Then, the cups are hoisted in toast without counting the rounds, but the regulations for drinking wine are that, if done in the morning, it does not waste the whole morning, and if done in the evening, it does not waste the whole night. When the guest of honor departs,

> the host bows in sending him off, and then proper regulation and good form have been brought to completion.[98]

The significance of the above lies in the unifying power of sound. It can be used to regulate words and speech, to manage musical rhythm, lend an air of solemnity to bowing and yielding, serve as a timer for the starting and stopping of a march, while harmonizing bodily advances and retreats. In other words, sound brings everything together into one body (*yiti* 一體) in much the same way as the sage views himself and the things of the world as comprising one body: "The sage penetrates bafflement and complication, rounding all into a single body, yet he does not know why—it is his inborn nature."[99] This mutual dependency of sound, manners, and customs translates into a ruler and his ministers practicing them at court, and nobles and commoners employing them amongst themselves. Rituals and music are hence learned in one's youth and tended to throughout one's adult life. This lifelong practice is not designed to change either ritual or music but ensure that people follow the goodness (*shan* 善) of the Dao. Doing so for a prolonged period of time, they view it with respect, support it and do not try to alter its ways, and in exchange, are themselves changed and reach self-completion. This, the host says, is what the former kings meant by using music.

Music was also required at court festivities and private banquets, allowing court scribes to observe the rise and fall of customs and traditions of other states. Court scribes, however, relied on the knowledge of musicians to learn which sounds were joyful because court musicians were not censured for speaking about the songs of different states, and they knew which ones should be prohibited. This is also what the former kings meant by using music, one that, according to the host, includes the sounds of Zheng. The guest referred to the music of Zheng as lewd and not worthy of being played, however, the host declares it to be supremely marvelous (*zhimiao* 至妙). It is so because it embodies the formless naturalness of the Dao. In the words of the *Huainanzi*: "The ultimate greatness of the uncarved block is its being without form or shape; the ultimate subtlety of the Dao is its being without model or measure."[100] The marvelous can affect people just as easily as the beautiful dazzles the eyes or confuses the will. Whether one overindulges in joy or is confused by wine, loss of self-control can be potentially disastrous, which is why the ultimate person (sage) guides the people of the world away from self-interestedness towards the openness of natural harmony.

The former kings feared the world would drift away and not return, hence they implemented the eight notes without sullying their sound, and severed their great harmony without exhausting their changes. They gave up sounds that were refined and inviting, making them joyful but not licentious, and in this way their music resembled a great soup lacking harmony that falls short of the peony's flavor. It is like drifting in the

vulgar and simple—such sound will not be pleasing and enjoyable to all. Should those above lose the Dao, causing the kingdom to lose its standards, men and women will pursue one another and the obscene and uncultivated will be without measure. As a result, manners will change and customs will find completion in what people take to be good. If the exalted is all that is willed, people will collectivity indulge in it; if joy is all that they are used to, how can they be punished? That people rely on harmonious sounds, matching and growing with them, then sincerity will be moved by words, the heart-mind will respond to harmony, and manners and customs will be completed together. It is because of this that it is named music. Sounds that are named as such are without obscenity and perversity because what is obscene and proper exists in the heart-mind. Thus, the body of the Hymns and Zheng are also readily seen.

Furthermore, the sages of antiquity feared the world would drift away due to loss of self-control from over-indulging in feelings of joy, and so introduced the eight notes (*bayin* 八音) without sullying their individual sounds, but doing so required severing them from the great harmony of the Dao's soundless sound. Although the notes numbered eight, this was enough to ensure their changes would not be fully exhausted. The number eight also marks a shift from the count of five given at the start of the essay, perhaps to conform to the eight hexagrams of the *Yijing*. Allowing the eight notes to interact and change positions, the ancient sages continued to refine music by abandoning the sounds of a sophisticated and sensuous nature, lending it a gayful air without making it licentious. In terms of joy without immorality, the *Lunyu* writes: "The 'Cry of the Osprey' expresses joy without becoming licentious, and expresses sorrow without falling into excessive pathos."[101] Creating music of this variety, however, resulted in what the host calls a great soup (*dageng* 大羹) lacking the harmony and flavor of a peony (*shaoyao* 勺藥) broth.[102] Without harmony, music will drift into the vulgar and simple resulting in an unpleasant sound that no one will enjoy. The reason for this stems from the king and his ministers losing the Dao, leading to the state abandoning its standards (rituals), such that men and women inappropriately engage one another, the obscene and vulgar exist unchecked, and manners and customs become skewed towards what the common people find satisfying. This is not the use of music the ancient sage-kings had envisioned.

If, however, people follow sounds that are harmonious, matching and growing alongside them, sincerity will be touched by the sounds of words, just as the heart-mind will respond to sounds that are harmonious. That manners and customs are able to mutually fulfill themselves is due to music, however, music so named lacks sounds and notes that are obscene and perverse because these characteristics only exist in the heart-mind. Music is the melodious combination of notes and sounds, nothing more. If it somehow contained feelings, how could the body of the Hymns and Zheng be so readily observable?

Notes

1 I have discussed this essay in Chai 2009. Other, noteworthy studies on Ji Kang's musical theory are by: Ronald Egan, R.H. van Gulik, Dai Lianzhang 1997, and Zhang Yu'an.
2 Literally, *dongye* 東野 means "eastern wilds." The *Shiji* 史記 states that Dongye is the domain of prince Liu Sheng 劉勝. Liu Sheng, son of emperor Jing of Han 漢景帝, was given the fiefdom of Zhongshan 中山 in 154 BCE and so is posthumously known as prince Jing of Zhongshan 中山靖王子 (r. 154–112 BCE). Whether Ji Kang was referring to the historical place or simply being humorous is impossible to say. See *Shiji*, book 21: 1100.
3 The host is a surrogate for Ji Kang.
4 The passage being cited is from the *Liji*, chapter 17. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 93–94. For a good discussion of how the "*Yueji* 樂記" influenced Ji Kang's thought on music, see Zhang Huihui, 132–154.
5 *Huainanzi*, chapter 9. See He Ning, 683; Major et al., 329.
6 To better understand Ji Kang's relationship with both Confucianism and classical Daoism, see Wu Deyu.
7 Ji Zha (ca. 576–484 BCE) was the fourth son of king Shoumeng of Wu 吳王壽夢 (r. 585–561 BCE) during the Zhou dynasty. He is said to have visited duke Ping of Jin 晉平公 (r. 557–532 BCE) and predicted that the Jin royal house would be divided between the states of Han 韓, Wei 魏, and Zhao 趙.
8 *Lunyu*, book 7. See Cheng Shude, 448; Slingerland, 66.
9 The five notes are: *gong* 宮, *shang* 商, *jiao* 角, *zhi* 徵, and *yu* 羽.
10 *Lunheng*, chapter 43. See Huang Hui, 775; Forke, volume 1: 92.
11 *Xunzi*, chapter 19. See Wang Xianqian, 366; Hutton, 210.
12 For a diagram that helps show how these variegated elements come together, see Ji Liangkang, 17.
13 *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 15, chapter 7. See Knoblock and Riegel, 365.
14 *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 15, chapter 7. See Knoblock and Riegel, 364.
15 *Liji*, chapter 1. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 62.
16 *Lunyu*, book 3. See Cheng Shude, 198; Slingerland, 25.
17 *Liji*, chapter 17. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 97.
18 *Lunyu*, book 17. See Cheng Shude, 1216; Slingerland, 205.
19 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13. See Guo Qingfan, 468; Watson, 101.
20 See the paper by Huang Yuren for more.
21 *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 17, chapter 2. See Knoblock and Riegel, 410. In their version of the text, Knoblock and Riegel follow Wang Niansun in changing *wuxiang* 無象 to *wuwei* 無為.
22 *Daodejing*, chapter 14. See Lou Yulie, 31; Lynn 1999: 72.
23 Ji Kang takes this line from the *Zhuangzi*: "Blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself—all take what they want for themselves, but who does the sounding?" *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 50; Watson, 8.
24 The three lines of Chinese text preceding the list of eight emotions are derived from the "Mao Preface 毛序" to the *Shijing* 詩經. Ji Kang, however, reverses their order. It should also be noted that the line "the music of a kingdom in peril conveys thoughts of grief" is also found in the *Liji*, chapter 17. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 94.
25 Regarding the number of feelings innate to humanity, the *Liji* says there are seven: "What are the feelings of men? They are joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, disliking, and liking. These seven feelings belong to men without their learning them." *Liji*, chapter 7. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 379. For more on how music shapes human feelings, see Zhang Huihui, 73–81.

26 To get a good sense of the roles Confucianism and Daoism played in the musical theory of Ji Kang's time, see Wu Guanhong 2015: 160–169; and Zeng Chunhai, 157–178.
27 *Liji*, chapter 17. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 93.
28 Bo Ya (ca. 8th–5th C. BCE) is said to have been a famous musician during the Spring and Autumn period, but no details of his life exist and he is not mentioned in the *Shiji*. Bo Ya was a close friend of Zhong Ziqi 鍾子期 and when the latter died, the former smashed his zither and never played it again. In the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, Ziqi demonstrates his musical insight during an encounter with a stranger: "One night, Zhong Ziqi heard someone playing on the musical stones, and he became filled with sadness … Zhong Ziqi sighed and said: 'How sad, how very sad! The heart is not the arm, the arm is not the hammer, and the hammer is not the stone. Yet since the sadness is in the heart, the wood and stone respond to it.'" *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 9, chapter 5. See Knoblock and Riegel, 220. Accounts of Bo Ya playing his zither can also be found in chapter 5 of the *Liezi* 列子 and book 14, chapter 2 of the *Lüshi Chunqiu*.
29 For an interesting discussion on the difference between feelings and affection, see Xiao Kaiwen, 10–15.
30 *Liji*, chapter 32. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 375.
31 For more on this, see Zhou Daxing 2008: 42–52; Liu Li 2010: 19–20 and 2011: 27–29.
32 The story of Confucius learning to play the zither with music master Xiang (*shi Xiang* 師襄) can be found in the opening section of chapter 35 of the *Kongzi Jiayu* 孔子家語.
33 Music master Juan (*shi Juan* 師涓) was from the state of Wei 衛 during the Spring and Autumn period and was an official in the court of duke Ling of Wei 衛靈公 (r. 534–492 BCE). Ziye 子野 is the style name of music master Kuang (*shi Kuang* 師曠), who was an official in the court of duke Ping of Jin 晋平公 (r. 557–532 BCE). When duke Ling traveled to Jin, he had master Juan play a tune he heard on the way but master Kuang stopped him after only a few notes. When the duke of Jin insisted master Juan continue, a mighty gust of wind blew the tiles off the palace roof and a three-year drought ensued. The duke fell ill and subsequently died. See Hawkes, 303n1.11.
34 *Huainanzi*, chapter 9. See He Ning, 620; Major et al., 302.
35 *Xunzi*, chapter 8. See Wang Xianqian, 138; Hutton, 63.
36 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 16. See Guo Qingfan, 547; Watson, 122.
37 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 79; Watson, 13.
38 *Huainanzi*, chapter 6. See He Ning, 454; Major et al., 217.
39 *Daodejing*, chapter 12. See Lou Yulie, 28; Lynn 1999: 70.
40 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 12. See Guo Qingfan, 453; Watson, 96.
41 The *Zhuangzi*, referring to Li Lou as Li Zhu 離朱, writes: "Thus he who is web toed in eyesight will be confused by the five colors, bewitched by patterns and designs, by the dazzling hues of blue and yellow, of embroidery and brocade—am I wrong? So we have Li Zhu." *Zhuangzi*, chapter 8. See Guo Qingfan, 314; Watson, 60.
42 In ancient China, one *xun* equaled eight *chi* 尺 or approximately 0.35 meters (one foot).
43 *Mengzi*, book 1A. See Yang Bojun 2013: 14; Bloom, 8. Interestingly, neither the *Daodejing* nor *Zhuangzi* use the term *qiuhao*, only *hao*.
44 The *Shiji* writes: "Sharpening blades is a weak talent yet master Zhi ate from a *ding* vessel. Making preserved stomach is easy and trifling yet master Zhuo had rows of cavalry." See *Shiji*, book 129: 3282.

45 Shouyang 首陽 was a mountain upon which the brothers Boyi and Shuqi starved themselves to death in protest of king Wen's founding of the Zhou dynasty.

46 Bian He (also known as master He 和氏, dates unknown) was from the state of Chu 楚. One day he found a piece of uncut jade and presented it to king Li of Chu 楚厲王 (r. ?–741 BCE). He was called a fraud and had his left foot cut off as punishment. Master He then presented it to king Wu of Chu 楚武王 (r. ?–690 BCE) who also said he was a fraud and had his right foot cut off as punishment. Finally, king Wen of Chu 楚文王 (r. ?–675 BCE) ascended the throne and master He again presented his jade. This time the jade was polished to reveal its inner treasure and the king named it "Master He's Jade." See *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, chapter 13 "*Heshi* 和氏." See Wang Xianshen, 95–96; Liao, volume 1: 113.

47 Yin Jifu 尹吉甫 was a high-ranking minister in the court of king Xuan of Zhou 周宣王 (r. 827–782 BCE). His eldest son, Boqi 伯竒, would be slandered by his second wife and expelled from the kingdom. When Jifu was hunting in the wilderness he happened to hear his son reciting a poem about him. By the time Jifu found him, Boqi had already drowned in a river. Boqi's poem would subsequently be set to the *qin* melody "Treading in the Frost" (*Lü Shuang Cao* 履霜操).

48 During the Warring States period, king Huiwen of Zhao 趙惠文王 (r. 298–266 BCE) acquired the famous jade of master He. King Zhao of Qin 秦昭王 (r. 306–251 BCE) learned of this and wrote to king Huiwen, expressing his willingness to exchange fifteen cities for the jade. Lin Xiangru 藺相如 (dates unknown), who was a minister in Huiwen's court, was selected to oversee the exchange. For a full account, see *Shiji*, book 81: 2439–2452.

49 In line 235 of his *Rhapsody on the Long Flute* (*Changdi fu* 長笛賦), Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166 CE) mentions Bu Zhan 不佔. In his annotation to this line, David Knechtges, in volume 3 of his *Wen Xuan* translation, writes the following: "Buzhan is Chen Buzhan 陳不佔, a native of Qi 齊. After Cui Zhu 崔杼 assassinated duke Zhuang of Qi 齊莊公 in 548 BCE, Chen Buzhan rushed to defend the ducal house. However, as soon as he heard the war drums outside the gate of the duke's residence, he died of fright." See Knechtges 1996: 274.

50 These musical pieces are listed in chapter 17 of the *Liji*, which says: "The *Dazhang* expressed the brilliance (of its author's virtue); the *Xianchi*, the completeness (of its authors); the *Shao* showed how (its author) continued (the virtue of his predecessor); the *Xia*, the greatness (of its author's virtue); the music of Yin and Zhou embraced every admirable quality." See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 106. In chapter 33 of the *Zhuangzi* we also read: "The Yellow Emperor had the *Xianchi*, Yao had the *Great Zhang*, Shun had the *Great Shao*, Yu had the *Great Xia*, and Tang had the *Great Hu*." See Guo Qingfan, 1074; Watson, 289. Separately, the story of the Yellow Emperor playing the *Xianchi* music is found in chapter 14 of the *Zhuangzi*. See Guo Qingfan, 501–510; Watson, 109–111. For a philosophical reading of this story, see Chai 2017b.

51 The story of Shun and Kui appears in the "*Canon of Shun*" (*shundian* 舜典) from the *Shangshu* 尚書: "Emperor Shun says: 'Kui, I command you to codify the music and instruct the noble sons in it … Let them use poems to verbalize their intents; songs to chant their speech; sounds to support their chants, and pitch-standards to harmonize their sounds. The eight [instrumental] timbres in tune with one another, none usurping another's position—thus may humans join with the spirits in harmony.' Kui responded: 'Yes, indeed! For when I strike the stones and tap the chimes, the hundred beasts are compelled to dance.'" See Brindley, 28.

52 For more on this, and the concept of natural principle, see the paper by Li Yaonan.
53 The story of Gelu hearing the mournful cries of a cow is found in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 book on lord Xi of Lu 魯僖公 (r. 659–627 BCE): "In winter, Gelu of Jie came: because he had not yet met with our lord, he came to visit our court again. We treated him with ritual propriety and lavished additional banquets and presents on him. Gelu of Jie heard a cow bellow and said, 'This cow has borne three calves and all have been sacrificed. That is how it sounds.' They inquired about this, and it was true." See Durrant et al., 431.
54 Master Kuang's musical assessment of the Chu army is found in the *Zuozhuan* book on lord Xiang of Lu 魯襄公 (r. 572–542 BCE): "The men of Jin heard about the Chu army attacking Zheng. The music master Kuang said, 'No harm will be done. I have sung music to northern airs and also to southern airs several times. The southern airs cannot prevail, for they are filled with the sounds of death. Chu will certainly accomplish nothing.'" See Durrant et al., 1059.
55 The story of Yangshe's mother and the foreboding cries of the baby is described in the *Zuozhuan* book on lord Zhao of Lu 魯昭公 (r. 541–510 BCE): "When lord Ping forced Shuxiang to marry her, she bore Yang Shi. Just after Yang Shi was born, Zirong's mother—the wife of Shuxiang's elder brother Yangshe Chi—ran to tell Shuxiang's mother the news: 'The wife of the eldest of our younger brothers has borne a son.' Shuxiang's mother went to see the child. She had just reached the hall when she heard the sound of his cry and turned back, saying, 'This is the sound of a jackal or wolf. A wolf cub is wild at heart. This very child—he and no other—will destroy the Yangshe lineage.' And she refused to see him." See Durrant et al. 1687.
56 *Daodejing*, chapter 27. See Lou Yulie, 71; Lynn 1999: 101.
57 The *Zhuangzi* writes: "Words exist because of meaning; once you've gotten the meaning, you can forget the words." See *Zhuangzi*, chapter 26. See Guo Qingfan, 944; Watson, 233.
58 A similar theory is offered by Wang Bi in his essay "Clarifying the Images" (*mingxiang* 明象), which is part of his collective commentary on the *Yijing*: "Thus, since the words are the means to explain images, once one gets the images, he forgets the words, and, since the images are means to allow us to concentrate on the ideas, once one gets the ideas, he forgets the images." See Lou Yulie, 609; Lynn 1994: 31.
59 *Lunheng*, chapter 50. See Huang Hui, 742; Forke, volume 2: 307.
60 In the Qin and Han dynasties, the Hu was another name for the Xiongnu 匈奴, a nomadic people who lived on China's northern steppe.
61 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 22. See Guo Qingfan, 731; Watson, 177. The first half of this line is from chapter 56 of the *Daodejing* while the second half is taken from chapter 2.
62 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13. See Guo Qingfan, 482–483; Watson, 105.
63 *Liji*, chapter 3. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 229.
64 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. See Guo Qingfan, 24; Watson, 3. For more on Zhuangzi's view of language, see Chai 2018.
65 For more on the actuality of music and its conceptualization, see Rosker, 111–118.
66 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 45; Watson, 7.
67 For more on Zhuangzi's view of music, see Chai 2017b.
68 This reference is to a story in *Master Yan's Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Yanzi Chunqiu* 晏子春秋) where duke Jing of Qi 齊景公 (r. 547–490 BCE) constructed a tower but was afraid to use it due to the presence of roosting owls. Bo Changqian 柏常騫 (the Chinese character *bo* appears in two

forms: 柏 and 伯) performed an exorcism and the owls died. When the duke asked if Bo's power could be used to extend his life, the answer was yes. As Bo was preparing the sacrifice to accompany his prayers for duke Jing's extended life, he came across master Yan who convinced him not to perform the ritual as the result would bring disaster in the form of an earthquake. See Wu Zeyu, 375–376. The story is translated in Milburn, 341–343. Bo Changqian also appears in chapter 25 of the *Zhuangzi*. See Guo Qingfan, 906–907; Watson, 222–223.

69 The *lai* 籟 is a bamboo flute containing three holes; the *yue* 籥 is a short flute having six holes.

70 The *Zhuangzi* says something to this effect: "In a gentle breeze they answer faintly, but in a full gale the chorus is gigantic. And when the fierce wind has passed on, then all the hollows are empty again. Have you never seen the tossing and trembling that goes on?" *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 46; Watson, 7.

71 The *zheng* is a twelve-stringed instrument while the *di* is a bamboo flute with eight holes.

72 The *qin* is a seven-stringed instrument while the *se* has twenty-five strings.

73 *Lunheng*, chapter 46. See Huang Hui, 689; Forke, volume 2: 346.

74 This line is modeled after the following from the *Liji*, chapter 17, which says: "When the ruler hears the sounds of his drums and tambours, he thinks of his leaders and commanders." See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 120–121.

75 For an interesting comparison between this aspect of Ji Kang's theory of music and the "three piping" (*sanlan* 三籟) of the *Zhuangzi*, see Lin Xiude; Wu Guanhong 2014b: 14–16.

76 *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 13, chapter 1. See Knoblock and Riegel, 282.

77 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 11. See Guo Qingfan, 395; Watson, 82.

78 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 50; Watson, 8.

79 The text reads: "When the sun and moon have already come out … it's a waste of light to go on burning the torches, is it not?" *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. See Guo Qingfan, 22; Watson, 3.

80 *Liji*, chapter 1. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 67.

81 *Xunzi*, chapter 31. See Wang Xianqian, 543; Hutton, 336.

82 So Jeong Park refers to emotions aroused by music, as opposed to emotions in general, as "musical emotions." See Park, 257.

83 For more, see Chai 2019b.

84 Robert Henricks, citing Dai Mingyang, says this text is a corrupted quote from chapter 20 of the *Xunzi*. See Henricks 1983: 100n121.

85 *Xiaojing*, chapter 12. See Rosemont and Ames, 112.

86 *Lunyu*, book 15. See Cheng Shude, 1087; Slingerland, 179.

87 *Daodejing*, chapter 3. See Lou Yulie, 8; Lynn 1999: 56.

88 *Lunyu*, book 15. See Cheng Shude, 1062; Slingerland, 175.

89 *Daodejing*, chapter 15. See Lou Yulie, 33; Lynn 1999: 74.

90 *Daodejing*, chapter 76. See Lou Yulie, 185; Lynn 1999: 184.

91 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 24. See Guo Qingfan, 834; Watson, 203. A slightly different formulation (*gaomu* 槁木, *sihui* 死灰) was used to describe the appearance of Nanguo Ziqi: "Can you really make the body like a withered tree and the [heart-] mind like dead ashes?" See *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 43; Watson, 7.

92 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 14. See Guo Qingfan, 502; Watson, 110.

93 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 555; Lynn 1994: 57.

94 *Xunzi*, chapter 17. See Wang Xianqian, 307; Hutton, 175.

95 *Xunzi*, chapter 8. See Wang Xianqian, 145–146; Hutton, 67.

96 According to Ulrike Middendorf, "the harmonious balance of contrasting parameters in matters of aural perception and taste came to appeal to the intrinsic nature of social and governmental processes." See Middendorf, 150.
97 *Liji*, chapter 17. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 100.
98 *Xunzi*, chapter 20. See Wang Xianqian, 384; Hutton 223.
99 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 25. See Guo Qingfan, 880; Watson, 216.
100 *Huainanzi*, chapter 11. See He Ning, 797; Major et al., 415.
101 *Lunyu*, book 3. See Cheng Shude, 198; Slingerland, 25.
102 In traditional Chinese medicine, the peony root is used to treat ailments of the liver, blood flow, sweating, and pain in the chest, stomach, limbs, and head.

2 Ethics

On Dispelling Self-Interest 釋私論

by Ji Kang[1]

Section 1

The gentleman is someone whose heart-mind does not employ right and wrong and whose actions do not oppose the Dao. How can I explain this? When the breath is tranquil and spirit empty, neither arrogance nor self-praise will exist in the heart-mind. When the body is bright and heart-mind profound, feelings will not be attached to desires. When arrogance and self-praise do not exist in the heart-mind, a person can transcend the teaching of names and rely on what is natural. When feelings are not attached to desires, a person can examine the precious and worthless, and penetrate the true state of things. The true state of things follows what penetrates it, thus the great Dao is not opposed. To transcend names is to rely on the heart-mind, hence right and wrong are not employed.

Among his many traits, the gentleman does not employ (*cuo* 措) right and wrong and so his actions align with the Dao. Unlike the Confucians, who cannot "transcend the teaching of names" (*yue mingjiao* 越名教) because they believe the differences between right and wrong can be resolved through the principle of benevolence or ritual propriety,[2] Ji Kang follows the Daoist model of "relying on what is natural" (*ren ziran* 任自然), such as this account from the *Zhuangzi*: "The sage harmonizes with both right and wrong and rests in heaven the equalizer."[3] Many of the *Zhuangzi*'s examples involving right and wrong are directed towards human knowledge, which is not Ji Kang's target; his argument is that moral openness can transcend cases of right and wrong but in order to be this way, one's worldview must be first overhauled. The *Daodejing* indicates how this might be done: "In this way, the sage embraces the One and becomes a model for all under heaven … He does not boast about himself, thus his merit is acknowledged. He avoids self-importance, thus he long endures."[4]

DOI: 10.4324/9780429331428-2

Ji Kang differentiates his view from that of the *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi* by grounding moral openness in the tranquil breath (*qijing* 氣靜) and empty spirit (*shenxu* 神虛). These two phrases do not appear in the texts by Laozi and Zhuangzi, but the latter does give examples of *shenjing*, *shenqi*, and *xujing*. The earliest text in which *qijing* appears seems to be the *Huangdi Neijing* 黃帝內經; *shenxu* thus appears to be a phase of Ji Kang's own devising. Needless to say, the state described by Ji Kang, even if it were inversed to read "empty breath and tranquil spirit," remains a prerequisite for any subsequent display of moral openness. As for why arrogance (*jin* 矜) and self-praise (*shang* 尚) cannot enter the gentleman's heart-mind, the *Zhuangzi* yet again offers a clue: "The sage is still not because he takes stillness to be good and therefore is still. The ten thousand things are insufficient to distract his mind—that is the reason he is still."[5] Having addressed the elements that are able to enter and leave the body (breath and spirit), Ji Kang moves on to the body itself.

When the body is bright, it has been cultivated to the extent that breath moves unobstructed within it. Within the body lies the heart-mind, the moral and emotional core of human beings. For the person whose body houses breath of a refined nature, their heart-mind becomes far-reaching in insight and feelings no longer attach to things because the heart-mind stops desiring what is external to it. In the words of the *Daodejing*, "this is why the sage desires to have no desire and does not value goods hard to get."[6] Moving from common feelings to those reinforced by a sense of rightness—arrogance and self-praise—the gentleman is able to avoid these too due to his breath being tranquil and spirit empty. Such being the case, the doctrinal teachings of the Confucians prove to be of no use to him as he is wholly reliant on the natural way of the Dao.

And so, the gentleman sees the value and non-value of things with clear eyes and an open heart-mind. This method of knowing the world, Ji Kang says, is how the gentleman penetrates the genuine state of things. What does he mean by this? Given the present essay is the only place where Ji Kang discusses the gentleman's power to "penetrate things" (*tongwu* 通物), we must look outside his writings for possible meanings. The *Zhuangzi* is replete with instances, such as the following: "[He penetrates the Dao and harmonizes with its virtue] dismisses benevolence and righteousness, rejects rites and music, for the mind of the perfect man knows where to find repose."[7] In a slightly later text, the *Heguanzi* 鶡冠子, we read: "Thus, the sage is the Dao and the Dao is not the sage. The Dao penetrates things and the sage orders them."[8] The above examples ground Ji Kang's statement that things are predisposed to follow the Dao and said naturalness does not oppose it. Such being the case, the heart-mind lacking arrogance and self-praise both transcends the doctrinal teachings of the Confucians while letting right and wrong reside unused within.[9]

To speak of the gentleman, not employing things is his priority while penetrating things is his goodness. To speak of the selfish person,

concealing his feelings is his error while opposing the Dao is his flaw. Why? Concealing his feelings, arrogance, and stinginess, these are the greatest wrongdoings of the selfish person; having a heart-mind that is empty and does not employ things, this is the genuine act of the gentleman. This is why the [book of] Great Dao says: "If I am without a body what will I have to fear?" and, "To not take life as precious is better than treasuring life." To speak in this way, when the ultimate person uses his heart-mind there is absolutely no trace of his employing things. Hence, Yi Yin did not employ his worth with Tang of Yin and the whole world benefitted and revealed his name. Dan of Zhou did not tend to his worthiness or hide his actions and upon assuming the role of regent, all was transformed and prospered. Yi Wu did not conceal his feelings from duke Huan of Qi and although the state was hegemonic, its ruler was revered.[10] *How can we say, regarding the use of their heart-mind, that these individuals acted for themselves and were attached to self-interest? Thus, the Guanzi says: "The gentleman who acts according to the Dao forgets his personhood." These words are true indeed!*

Unlike the *qi*-based cosmology that commences Ji Kang's *On Wisdom and Courage*, he opens this essay with a thesis rooted in the naturalness (*ziran* 自然) of the sagacious individual. If his argument for moral openness is to succeed, Ji Kang cannot simply decry the self-interested behavior of society and leave it at that—he must offer historical examples that can stand alongside that of the gentleman, and indeed he does so in this paragraph of his opening section. Contrasting the character of the gentleman with that of the selfish person, we are given a rather narrow assessment: the gentleman is good (*mei* 美) because he follows the natural way of the Dao and penetrates things to their genuine core; conversely, the selfish person is flawed (*que* 闕) because he deliberately conceals his feelings which puts him at odds with the naturalness of the Dao.[11]

Before offering historical evidence for this statement, Ji Kang quotes two passages from the *Book of Great Dao* (i.e., the *Daodejing*): "When I am no longer bound by my own person, what calamity could befall me?"[12] and, "It is only by acting without regard for life that one becomes more of a worthy than one who values life."[13] It seems odd that Ji Kang uses examples of the precarious nature of life to give credence to his argument for dispelling self-interest. However, the purpose of doing so is to establish a viewpoint wherein moral openness cannot occur unless one has already cast off their attachment to a bodily self and a heart-mind that is the arbiter of all things right and wrong. Specifically, Ji Kang's viewpoint is that the gentleman, with his tranquil breath and empty spirit, makes use of things without their being aware of it. In the words of the *Zhuangzi*, "the perfect man uses his mind like a mirror—going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing. Therefore he can win out over things and not hurt himself."[14]

With the metaphysical component of his opening argument out of the way, Ji Kang proceeds to outline the supporting historical evidence. Citing five persons from high antiquity—Yi Yin 伊尹 and Tang of Yin 湯殷 from the Shang dynasty,[15] and Dan of Zhou 周公旦,[16] Yi Wu 夷吾 (i.e., Guan Zhong 管仲), and duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 from the Spring and Autumn Period[17]—Ji Kang argues that each of them was meritorious because they cherished transparency in thought and action. To further emphasize this point, Ji Kang repeats an expression attributed to Guanzi 管子: "The gentleman who moves with the Dao forgets he has a body." Despite this sentence not appearing in the *Guanzi* as it survives today, and that the phrase "forgets he has a body 忘其爲身" is absent from all pre-Han texts, there are nevertheless variations on it, such as this one from the *Zhuangzi*: "Hence he who nourishes his will forgets about his bodily form; he who nourishes his bodily form forgets about questions of gain; and he who arrives at the Dao forgets about his mind."[18]

Since the gentleman's actions are worthy, he does not first examine their measure and then act. Relying on his heart-mind without exhausting it, he does not first discuss its goodness and then decides what is correct. Making clear his feelings without employing them, he does not first discuss their rightness and then act. Thus, he loftily forgets the worthy and worthiness and their measure coincides. He unexpectedly relies on his heart-mind and his heart-mind and the good meet. Baffled, he employs nothing and his affairs and the right come together.

Having laid out the moral worthiness of these historical figures, Ji Kang reiterates how the gentleman's actions are worthy too: he refrains from calculating the benefit of his actions before conducting them, and avoids deliberating on their goodness before deciding if they are right or not. Though he relies on his heart-mind, he does not exhaust it because it is overseen by his tranquil breath; though he elucidates his feelings, he does not employ them because they reside in the emptiness of his spirit. As a role model, the gentleman can be likened to water, which, as noted in the *Guanzi*, gives him the opportunity to teach others how to be without self-interest:

> When the water is unadulterated, people's hearts will be correct. When the water is pure, people's hearts will be at ease. When people's hearts are correct, they have no desire to be corrupt. When people's hearts are at ease, their conduct will never be depraved.[19]

As Ji Kang ends the first section of his essay, we are presented with three propositions: the gentleman forgets what is worthy and as a result, the worthy and its degree of worthiness coincide. The coming together of the worthy and its measure by forgetting them both is an important first step in the gentleman's program of moral openness. Ji Kang next says

that even when the gentleman has to unexpectedly rely on his heart-mind, it still manages to find the good. This further illustrates the benefit of being morally open. Finally, should he find himself baffled (*tangran* 儻然)[20] by something, even though he does not employ his heart-mind to rectify the situation, said matter and the right still come together. To act out of self-interest is thus to lose what is right, good, and worthy, the cost of which Ji Kang will discuss in the next section.

Section 2

Thus, in discussing openness and self-interest, although a person's will may be set on the Dao while also preserving the good, acting without wickedness and evil, if they hide what is in their breast, it cannot be said they lack self-interest. If a person wishes to boast of their goodness, even though such feelings may oppose the Dao, if they make clear all that is cherished, they cannot be said to lack openness. Hence, to hold to the principle that one must be open and restrain feelings that are not, although a person acts out of goodness, they are still bound to self-interest. If a person wishes to boast of their goodness, they can avoid being beguiled by self-interest. However, if a person values their name and treasures their heart-mind, they must make clear their feelings of right and wrong.

This section of the essay allows Ji Kang to clarify what he means by right and wrong, while Section 3 links the right to auspicious fate and the wrong to disaster. Continuing from where he left off in Section 1, Ji Kang summarizes his findings as follows: if a person sets their will on the Dao, preserves the good while avoiding malice, so long as they hide what is in their heart-mind, they will be considered self-interested. Conversely, if someone trumpets their goodness, putting them at odds with the Dao, as long as they reveal their feelings to others, they will be considered open. Even if a person adheres to the principle of openness, stamping-out any feelings that are not, and acts with goodness in mind, they still meet Ji Kang's criteria for self-interest because they do not openly share their private feelings with others. But is it really that easy? Why should expressing all feelings, whether good or bad, be taken as a sign of openness? Surely it is not motivated by valuing one's name (*zhong qi ming* 重其名) and treasuring one's heart-mind (*gui qi xing* 貴其心) as Ji Kang says.

When right and wrong must be made clear, a person who is good will not conceal feelings that are not, and a person who is wrong will not add to it the greater wrong of not being open. If a person lacks the first wrong, the good will be obtained. If a person lacks the greater wrong, they will have nothing but their wrongness, which they can then correct. Not only is this the way to be completely good, it motivates others to be good too. As the good is wholly good and the wrong can be corrected, how much more so will it be the case when right and wrong are at their

extreme? Thus, good and bad are the extreme of things. If a person is located between these two, then whatever they do, openness will result in success and self-interest in failure. Since both use the same vessel, some will succeed and others will fail. As for openness and self-interest, they pave the way to success and failure and are the gates to auspicious and inauspicious fate.

In fact, Ji Kang is not arguing for false honesty, at least not for the gentleman whose breath and spirit are rooted in the Dao. To give some perspective of the levels of openness that he is striving for—levels that in themselves are educational rungs on the ladder to ultimate openness—we can turn to the *Zhuangzi*: "The ordinary person prizes gain, the man of integrity prizes name, the worthy man honors ambition, the sage values spiritual essence."[21] Motivating others to do good (i.e., cultivate themselves in the Dao) is one of the unwritten responsibilities of the gentleman.[22] Distinguishing right and wrong, and openly recognizing them as such, the gentleman avoids compounding the wrong by adding to it the greater wrong of concealing his wrongdoing. Without committing wrong, the good can be obtained; without concealing the fact that wrongness exists, all that remains is the wrong, which can be corrected. With only one's wrongness to correct, the good can be obtained.

The argument so far is straightforward; it becomes more complex when Ji Kang introduces the idea of the ultimate (*zhi* 至). The good retains its goodness no matter the situation in which it is being applied or acquired. The wrong, however, has varying degrees of severity that require ever-greater effort to correct. The more extreme the wrong is, the more extreme the good appears because of it. Ji Kang thus reasons that goodness always results in openness but the wrong, regardless of its measure, is the result of self-interest and hence failure. Given it is only the gentleman or sage who stands on the side of pure goodness, the rest of us live somewhere between the ultimate poles of right and wrong. And yet, all of us, the gentleman included, have the same vessel (*qi* 器) for our bodies. Thus, the variable determining a person's goodness is not their physical body but whether or not they openly speak of, or conceal, right and wrong, the outcome of which directly influences their chances of having an auspicious (*ji* 吉) or inauspicious (*xiong* 凶) fate.

Section 3

Thus, things at the level of ultimacy and which do not change are few, while those that are not and use what is at hand, are many. Take the endowed nature of the average person: their fate depends on how they use this substance. If their heart-mind dwells upon the upright and outspoken figures of antiquity, and if they intend to walk the path of openness by directly speaking what is in their heart-mind, then all of their words will be right. If they act like their feelings are touched, then

all their affairs will be auspicious. As a result, what others employ is not what the gentleman employs; what others desire out of self-interest is not what the gentleman sees as self-interest. His words are not calculated according to success and failure, yet he encounters the good; his actions are not guided according to right and wrong, yet his fortune is auspicious. How is this not due to the standards of openness bringing success and self-interest failure? Such being the case, what need is there to employ anything else?

Before providing historical examples of persons having an auspicious fate as a result of their shunning self-interest, Ji Kang has a bit more to say about why doing so leads to success. At the end of Section 2, Ji Kang stated that good and bad are two extremes of things. Here, he elaborates by saying people who are at the ultimate levels of good and bad are few while those who swing from one state to the other because of the mediocrity of their inborn nature are numerous. This is in fact a reference to the *Lunyu*: "By nature people are similar; they diverge as the result of practice."[23] Said differently, the gentleman is located on the side of what is right and good. His dwelling there is constant yet he continuously adjusts his ways to preserve his harmony with the Dao. On the other side of the spectrum, where there is nothing but wrong and evil, is the tyrant. His position is also constant but he does not adjust his ways and thus has no association with the Dao. Since the average person is not close to either of these, they must make do with their inborn nature. With the multitude of common people using a multitude of doctrines to guide their lives, the direction their fates take depends on their measure of self-interest.

Despite an inability to change what is naturally endowed, the average person can still work towards moral openness by reflecting on the words and actions of those upright persons from antiquity and implement such forthrightness in their own lives. On the notion that people of middle standing and below should revere those superior to them, Confucius justified such behavior in this way: "You can discuss the loftiest matters with those who are above average, but not with those who are below average."[24] Thus, while their words may be right and their actions favorable, the openness of the average person is not of the same kind as that enjoyed by the gentleman. The gentleman's words are not chosen to influence success or discourage failure, just as his actions are not assisted by doing what is right or avoiding what is wrong; rather, to borrow the *Zhuangzi*'s description: "[The sage] does not pursue profit, does not dodge harm … says nothing yet says something, says something yet says nothing."[25] In the naturalness of such genuine openness, how can the gentleman not be without self-interest?

Thus, when Li Fu revealed he was a thief, king Wen of Jin was delighted. When Bo Di bemoaned his misdeeds, he proved his loyalty and so kept his life. When Mu Xian confessed his crime, his words were well-received

and his name was praised. When Jianli gave a heartfelt recital, those in the hall gushed with tears. These men all risked their lives in the face of calamity, yet they arrived at the same unexpected opportunity; by displaying what they knew in their heart-mind, they remained safe. How much more so will it be with the gentleman who lacks these crimes but has goodness? To be overly concerned with goodness is the cause of trouble, thus when one is aware of trouble it is no longer troublesome. To be in trouble but overcome it is better than remaining troubled.

The examples Ji Kang offers—Li Fu 里鳧,[26] Bo Di 勃鞮,[27] Mu Xian 繆賢,[28] and Gao Jianli 高漸離[29]—are not representative of morally outstanding individuals. It seems their contact with the highest echelon of society speaks more to the moral character of the respective kings involved than what they accomplished. One cannot but wonder if Ji Kang had selected persons from the middle or lower-stratum of society, would they have been treated in a similar manner? One suspects not. Needless to say, the point being made is that if persons who commit crimes can find security in genuine openness, imagine how much more secure the gentleman is given he has no crimes to haunt him! The source of our trouble, Ji Kang writes, is an overconcern with goodness. Thus, when a person is aware of trouble it ceases being troublesome. This line is taken from the *Daodejing* which reads: "It is only by regarding harm as harm that one suffers no harm. That the sage suffers no harm is because he regards harm as harm, and this is why he suffers no harm."[30] The second sentence in the *Daodejing* passage also serves as a model for Ji Kang's conclusion to this section: the person who finds trouble but overcomes it is better than the person who remains troubled. Such being the case, misfortune is the result of confusion over what is right and wrong, the focus of the next section of the essay. Not merely a question of appearance, the misrepresentation of right and wrong boils down to the presence or absence of self-interest.

Section 4

There are times when a matter appears wrong but it is not, and instances when it appears right but it is not. One should investigate this. In situations where a person should be flexible, those who are arrogant become very accepting, those who are stingy become highly upright, those who are foolish turn into the wise, and those who are cruel engage in acts of benevolence. During the time of their arrogance and stinginess, one cannot say they were not upright; during the time when they acted with hatred and cruelty, one cannot say they were not humane. These are instances of a matter appearing wrong when in fact it was right. When others use slanderous words while appearing trustworthy, one cannot say they are sincere; when fierce robbers appear loyal, one cannot say they lack self-interest. These are instances of a matter appearing right

when in fact it was wrong. Thus, to discuss the motives of such persons we must determine their interests, preserve their words to grant their principles, and investigate their feelings to seek their changes. If a person's beginning can be shown and their ending understood, then those feelings moved by self-interest cannot follow what appears to be right[31] *while tolerating the wrong. A person whose heart-mind is good and bright cannot pursue what appears to be wrong*[32] *while carrying within themselves the notion of the right.*

The debate over knowing right and wrong is a very old one in China. One of the earliest texts to offer an opinion on this topic was the *Zhuangzi*: "[The great person] knows that no line can be drawn between right and wrong, no border can be fixed between great and small."[33] The average person, however, uses their heart-mind to divide what is indivisible and delimit what cannot be demarcated. Other texts, such as the *Xunzi*, also notice a connection between one's understanding of things and their designation of right and wrong: "To endorse what is right and condemn what is wrong is called "wisdom" (*zhi* 智). To endorse what is wrong and condemn what is right is called "foolish" (*yu* 愚)."[34] There is a pattern emerging here, and it continues into the Han dynasty with the *Lunheng*: "However the virtuous and the cunning do not act in the same way. Both declare good to be good and bad, and both enjoy real fame, but in their works the former build up, the latter destroy."[35] Another Han text is the *Huainanzi*: "If [the sage] can do [something], he does it; if he cannot do it, he does not do it. If he cannot do it, he does not do it; [but] if he can do it, he does it."[36] Ji Kang's drawing attention to the confusion people have over right and wrong is thus not out of step with tradition.

Thus, what is actually right appears temporarily wrong and will only be clarified afterward; what is actually wrong appears temporarily right and will only be clarified afterward. If openness and self-interest are mutually made evident, then to act out of self-interest will prove hopeless, yet the person who is good and bright will be free of this burden. To act out of self-interest and have no hope, one cannot but consider changing their faults. If one stands in openness and has nothing to fear, their actions will have no doubts. This is the great order of the Dao. Thus, the head concubine spilled the [poisoned] wine and was shamed for her crime;[37] *Wang Ling made objections at court but Chen Ping obeyed the royal edict.*[38] *When looked at in this way, are these not cases where something appeared wrong but was later shown not to be the case?*

What Ji Kang adds to the discussion is a dose of psychology and moral reasoning. This can be seen in the four cases mentioned above: the arrogant turn into the accommodating, the stingy become charitable, fools transform into the wise, and the cruel embrace benevolence. In each case, the original state appears wrong yet what it transforms into is right; put

differently, the outward appearance was wrong yet the inward potential is right. So long as the former is expressed with complete openness, the latter will overtake it. In instances where the right turns out to be wrong—the trustworthy slanderer and the loyal thief—the reverse is true: the outward façade of rightness is too weak to overpower the inward presence of wrongness. Such being the case, any effort to analyze the motives of people such as these requires, according to Ji Kang, that we first determine their interests to preserve their words because words point to the principles framing their heart-mind, after which their feelings can be examined to lay bare any changes in said principles.

Should we successfully uncover the beginning (i.e., principle), we will be able to comprehend the ending (i.e., words). Feelings, which by nature are not constant, are moved by self-interest; as feelings cannot be moved by openness, their changes can only occur when there is a lack of correspondence between the drive of self-interest and the resulting pleasure (i.e., rightness) derived from it. As Ji Kang puts it, selfish feelings cannot follow the right while accepting the wrong, for if a person willingly follows the wrong because it makes them feel right, said wrong actually becomes right. Similarly, the person whose heart-mind is good cannot follow what seems wrong while simultaneously embodying the right. Thus, to overcome the confusion over right and wrong caused by their momentary presence as one before turning into the other is to equalize them both using the perspective of the Dao, or, as Ji Kang refers to it, the great order of the Dao (*dazhi zhi dao* 大治之道).

What is this great order of the Dao? Ji Kang provides three illustrative examples: to be without the burden of self-interest by annulling it with openness, to change one's faults by realizing the hopelessness of self-interest, and to act without hesitation by absolving one's fears with the light of open clarity. Such being the case, is it any wonder, Ji Kang writes, the concubine was forgiven for preventing the wife from poisoning her husband, or that Chen Ping 陳平 carried out the royal edict against the objections of Wang Ling 王陵? Both acts were initially taken to be wrong but later shown to be right.

Section 5

If one understands the sincere behavior of the gentleman, whenever displays of openness and self-interest are found, the entire court and those on the stairs outside will stare at him and say: That is a good man! Yet the man whose back faces others in order to keeps things private out of self-interest will receive a different response. To embrace [the will] and not change while hiding one's feelings, this is to truly lose one's spirit to all that is confusing, to drown one's body in the fixity of names, to control one's heart-mind by all that is fearful, and attach one's feelings to all that is desired. Such persons think themselves right

with no one more worthy than they. They have yet to know the cruelty of an attack on the flesh or the disaster that terrorizes the heart-mind. They cannot gather their feelings and reflect on them, nor reject names and rely on reality.

With this section, we not only reach the heart of the essay, we see Ji Kang return to his earlier discussion of spirit and touch upon the ways self-interest physically affects us. Using the gentleman as the unassailable model of goodness, Ji Kang proceeds to attack those who are his antithesis: the self-interested individuals who hide their feelings while remaining steadfast in their conviction that the will is the best judge of right and wrong. These people lose their spirit (*shen yi sang* 神以喪) to the confusion surrounding right and wrong, their body drowns in the fixity of names (*ti yi ni* 體以溺), fear dominates their heart-mind, and their feelings become controlled by their desires. The end result, Ji Kang argues, is that people of self-interest suffer from self-induced confusion, yet said suffering pales in comparison to a cruel attack on the flesh (*gongji zhi can* 攻肌之慘), or a disaster that terrorizes the heart-mind (*haixin zhi huo* 駭心之禍). Thus, people stricken with self-interest cannot gather together their feelings and reflect on them, nor cast aside names in order to rely on the nameless reality of things.

Of the handful of colorful phrases used by Ji Kang in this paragraph, the most notable is "lose one's spirit." In the *Guiguzi* 鬼谷子 we read: "When the will is neglected and the heart-mind's breath emptied, the spirit will be lost; to lose one's spirit is to be aimless and to be aimless is to be uncoordinated."[39] The *Zhuangzi* has the expression "lose one's companion" (*sang qi ou* 喪其耦) in its second chapter, with "companion" being another way of describing the spirit. There are also examples, both within and beyond Daoism, of cultivating the body, breath, and spirit, the purpose of which is to preserve or prolong one's life. Ji Kang laments how scores of people have lost their spirit due to their misplaced faith in the will to act as the arbiter of right and wrong.

The second striking expression is the "body drowning in the fixity of names." It is interesting that Ji Kang should choose "*changming* 常名" as the cause of said drowning. A term appearing just once in chapter 1 of the *Daodejing* in reference to the "constant name" of the Dao, it was thereafter recycled in the *Wenzi* 文子 and *Huainanzi*. However, in the *Zhuangzi* we are told something quite different: "name is only the guest of reality"[40] and "fame is something to beat people down with."[41] Zhuangzi's argument is directed to the Confucian doctrine of rectifying names (*zhengming* 正名), whereby names must reflect the actuality of the circumstances to which they are applied. Ji Kang is thus targeting this "fixed" application of names and is not opposing the constant name of the Dao first introduced by Laozi. What is more, while the present essay is the only place where Ji Kang uses *changming*, in his reply to Xiang Xiu's rebuttal to his essay *On Nourishing Life*, he writes: "In nourishing

life, there are five difficulties: not extinguishing names and profit is the first difficulty." If we are to avoid being overwhelmed by names and their narrow view of reality, the path of self-interest must not be taken.

Their heart-mind has its right but it is concealed out of self-interest; their will has its good but employing it makes it bad. They do not employ what should be employed and employ what should not be employed. They do not search for the principle of what should not be employed but search for the way to use what they employ. Thus, in knowing what they employ, they are kept in the dark by such employment, taking what they do not employ as crude and what they employ as skillful. Their only fear is that the hidden is not profound; their only worry is that the concealed is not secret. Thus, with an arrogant, uncongenial appearance, they look down on the common people, and with overbearing, ornamental speech, they crave vulgar fame. Of all the good practices to date, they say, none are greater than this. Over-using their heart-mind to the end of their days, they fail to catch sight of what lies beyond it. Thus, while they are able to perfect their selfish selves, they will lose their naturally given substance.

Here, Ji Kang addresses the improper means by which people of self-interest employ their heart-mind. Not dismissing them out-of-hand, Ji Kang acknowledges their latent potential: their heart-mind contains a sense of rightness and their will knows the good; however, the right within their heart-mind is obstructed by self-interest while the goodness of their will is perverted into the bad. The reason for this is rather circular: they do not use what should be used and use what should not be used. This is an adaptation of the *Zhuangzi*'s statement: "When men do not forget what can be forgotten but forget what cannot be forgotten—that may be called true forgetting."[42] What Zhuangzi is pointing to when he speaks of what should be forgotten are the ethical values and political framework of the Confucians; what should not be forgotten is the Dao and that all things depend on it for their existence. In Ji Kang's case, what people should forget is self-interest and what they should not forget is preserving their tranquil breath and empty spirit. What people also fail to do is discover the principle behind what should not be used (i.e., the Dao) because they are too busy finding ways to draw upon what they use (i.e., their heart-mind and will). The outcome is an inverse understanding of things: in knowing what they employ, and putting this knowledge into action, they dismiss what is not employed, calling it crude. However, we are told by the *Zhuangzi* that the gentleman of antiquity did not employ what is useable but cultivated what the world took to be unusable:

> The men of ancient times who practiced the Dao employed tranquility to cultivate knowledge. Knowledge lived in them, yet they did nothing for its sake. So they may be said to have employed

> knowledge to cultivate tranquility. Knowledge and tranquility took turns cultivating each other, and harmony and order emerged from the inborn nature.[43]

The person of self-interest, however, fears the hidden, is not profound (*yin zhi buwei* 隱之不微), and worries that the concealed is not secret (*ni zhi bumi* 匿之不密). What does Ji Kang mean by this? If one's feelings are not profound, then being open about them will not lead to a favorable outcome as we saw at the end of Section 3 above. Furthermore, keeping these feelings private until such time as they can be used to enhance one's lot guarantees that when they are eventually made known, the receiving party will have no choice but to overlook their self-interested motive(s). Reading concealment in this way, the *Lunyu* observes:

> Clever words, an ingratiating countenance, and perfunctory gestures of respect are all things that Zuoqiu Ming considered shameful, and I, too, consider them shameful. Concealing one's resentment and feigning friendship toward another is something Zuoqiu considered shameful, and I, too, consider it shameful.[44]

Alternatively, if we understand concealment in terms of the words of self-interested persons, the *Zhuangzi* would explain it thusly: "When the Dao relies on little accomplishments and words rely on vain show, then we have the rights and wrongs of the Confucians and the Mohists."[45]

Regardless of the approach we accept, Ji Kang believes that people driven by self-interest come across as arrogant and unfriendly, looking down on the common people while speaking to them in an overbearing and flowery language. The reason they behave this way is due to their lust for fame and the vulgarity accompanying it. Pursuing fame as they do, they overextend their heart-mind and in doing so, fail to see what lies beyond it. In failing to see the openness of the world beyond the human heart-mind, people of self-interest wind up losing their naturally given substance (*ziran zhi zhi* 自然之質). This substance is not the physical body but the breath feeding it life, the spirit animating its movements, and the Dao which bestows its allotted lifespan.

Though their feelings are hidden and concealed, they certainly exist in their heart-mind. What is more, machinations of falsity and negligence shape their affairs. In this way, when their discussions of right and wrong are made clear, the reality of reward and punishment also becomes true. Not knowing that one can brave the shade without a shadow, they fear their shadow is not hidden;[46] *not knowing one cannot employ things without harm, they fear their employment is not skillful enough. How sad! It for this reason that Shen Hou was mistreated and abandoned by Chu Gong. Chancellor Pi indulged in selfishness and met with misfortune.*

To speak on account of this, there has never been a person who embraced the hidden and looked back at his selfishness, allowing his body to stand in a time of clarity. There has never been a person who hides his wrongs and conceals his feelings, gaining the trust of a wise ruler.

Ji Kang reminds us that while the self-interested individual does not openly reveal their feelings, they nevertheless have them. However, one of the reasons why they are unwilling to openly share them is that the "machinations of falsity and negligence" (*wei dai zhi ji* 偽怠之機) that have infiltrated their heart-mind also shapes how they conduct themselves. Thus, when the person of self-interest clarifies their stance on right and wrong, what they are clarifying is not their complementarity when seen from the perspective of the Dao but, rather, right and wrong as they pertain to reward and punishment (*shang fa* 賞罰). Self-interest is thus not about protecting one's feelings as it is about securing rewards while avoiding punishment. It also, more significantly for Ji Kang, indicates tremendous insecurity insofar as people who harbor self-interested motives possess a profound fear of failure and inadequacy—they lack sufficient skill to succeed naturally and so turn to the scheming ways of self-interest. As if to emphasize this point, Ji Kang offers his own take on the famous story in the *Zhuangzi* about the man who was afraid of his own shadow: "Not knowing that one can brave the shade without a shadow, they fear their shadow is not hidden; not knowing one cannot employ things without harm, they fear their employment is not skillful enough. How sad!"[47]

Drawing this section to a close, Ji Kang's evidence takes the form of two historical figures: Shen Hou 申侯[48] and Chancellor Pi 宰嚭.[49] The lessons to be learned from them is: one, history had yet to witness a selfish individual who, reflecting on their behavior, simultaneously stood in a time of clarity; and two, no person who masks their wrongs while hiding their feelings has the unwavering trust of a wise ruler. In the next and penultimate section of the essay, these failings will be pitted against the incomparable goodness of the gentleman.

Section 6

As the gentleman already has this naturally given nature, he looks once more at these examples.[50] *What he treasures are the profound and bright, and as these are rare, he preserves them. What he rejects are the arrogant and stingy, and as these are bad, he keeps them at a distance. If he employs things that are wrong, he will be inwardly ashamed; if he hides things that are worthless, he will be outwardly humiliated. Such is why his words do not warily conceal and his actions do not warily hide. He does not warily favor something because he likes it; he does not warily oppose something because he dislikes it. His heart-mind lacks arrogance and his feelings lack attachment. With a clean body and pure*

spirit, his notion of right and wrong is suitable for all. He is loyal and caring to the enlightened king, yet is honest and sincere with the common people. He relegates ambition to the remote wastelands, handing down generosity to the end of time. Are these not the high actions and beautiful wishes of the worthy person, the gentleman?

As the gentleman lacks self-interest on account of his tranquil breath and empty spirit, the demise of Shen Hou, Chancellor Pi, and other ill-fated figures mentioned by Ji Kang, reconfirms his praxis of moral openness guided by what is profound and bright (i.e., the Dao), and rejects all that is arrogant and stingy. Since the former is rare, he preserves them within himself; as the latter is bad, he keeps them at a distance. In this way, should the gentleman employ what is wrong or conceal what is worthless, he will be inwardly ashamed and outwardly humiliated. Thus, Ji Kang writes, the gentleman's words do not conceal and his actions do not hide his embracement of the rarest of mysteries. Protecting his spirit by not allowing external things to enter and occupy his heart-mind, the Daoist gentleman possesses an understanding of the world that is not rooted in the affairs of the world. For example, in the *Zhuangzi* we are told: "As to what is beyond the six realms, the sage admits it exists but does not theorize. As to what is within the six realms, he theorizes but does not debate."[51] What is more, the *Daodejing* observes: "When the superior man hears the Dao, he diligently practices it. When the average man hears the Dao, sometimes he retains it, sometimes he forgets it. When the inferior man hears the Dao, he laughs loudly at it."[52] Thus, whatever course of action the gentleman takes, it is not founded on tangible results or his likes and dislikes.[53]

As to why the gentleman does not allow his likes and dislikes to influence his life choices, Ji Kang's essay up to this point will suffice as an answer. A more earnest response reveals that the shame and humiliation spoken of above are not akin to that felt by the common people, for the Daoist sage does not distinguish between shame and honor, praise and humiliation. If we take Ji Kang as implying the gentleman in his essay is actually of the Confucian variety, then these notions would most definitely apply; however, Ji Kang is attacking the values held dear by the Confucians, arguing they portray extremes of self-interested behavior. As he says here, the heart-mind of the gentleman is without arrogance and his feelings attach to nothing. This accords with what the *Zhuangzi* says:

> When I talk about having no feelings, I mean that a man doesn't allow likes or dislikes to get in and do him harm. He just lets things be the way they are and doesn't try to help life along."[54]

Additionally, since the gentleman's body is clean and his spirit pure, he makes known right and wrong in a manner that is suitable for all. The cleansing of body and spirit is discussed in Ji Kang's essay *On Nourishing*

Life; as for the suitability of right and wrong, so long as they are allowed to transform, one into the other, when seen from the perspective of the Dao, there will not be any occasion when right is not also wrong, and wrong is not also right. The *Zhuangzi* explains: "'That' comes out of 'this,' and 'this' depends on 'that'—which is to say that 'this' and 'that' give birth to each other."[55] But why should the gentleman exhibit feelings towards the ruler and general population if, as Zhuangzi wrote, he is without feelings? The answer, Ji Kang says, lies in the gentleman banishing ambition to the wastelands while handing down generosity[56] to the end of time.

Section 7

Someone asked if Diwu Lun was a person who behaves out of self-interest. His reply was: When the son of my older brother was sick, I visited him ten times a night and slept peacefully upon my return home. When my own son was sick, I did not visit him for the entire morning and could not sleep the entire night. Can this be called acting out of self-interest? Or is it not acting out of self-interest? My reply is this: No, it is not acting out of self-interest. Self-interest derives its name from what is not spoken, openness derives its name from speaking about everything, the good derives its form from not being stingy, and being wrong derives its material from employing things. Now, Diwu Lun displaying his feelings is to be without self-interest; his arrogance in visiting his brother's son and not sleeping while his own son was ill is his error. To lack self-interest yet be wrong is because the will is focused on not employing things. To say that a person does not employ things is not equal to saying their actions are entirely right. To say that a person is overly stingy is not the same as saying they simply stop speaking. Thus, to be overly stingy is wrong while not employing things is right. In this way, the correctness of not employing things comes from the will not having self-praise and the heart-mind not having desire. When a person is clear about the profound nature of the great Dao and acts naturally, the result is they can do no wrong. To embrace the One and not employ things is to be without self-interest and do no wrong. When these two meanings are combined, there will be nothing but goodness. To be wrong yet willing to admit as much is better than not saying anything out of self-interest; to be wrong yet not employ things is hence a small error. Now, Diwu Lun was wrong but he revealed it and so we cannot say he lacked openness; in revealing all of his rights and wrongs, we cannot say he acted out of self-interest. If we say he acted out of self-interest because he was wrong, we would have to say such a view is confused. This is the principle of openness and self-interest.

This final section of the essay opens with a discussion of Diwu Lun 第五倫.[57] Although he had a long yet rocky political career, Diwu Lun

never lost the support of the imperial court. He was known for his honesty, shunning of luxury, and refusal to let his personal interests get in the way of his life as a public official. Having quoted him, Ji Kang upholds Diwu Lun as another historical example of a person lacking self-interest. Why is this the case when most people would say Diwu Lun acted out of self-interest by visiting his brother's son but not his own when both of them fell ill? In the former case Diwu Lun slept soundly, but in the latter case he could not sleep at all. Was this because he felt guilty for neglecting his own son? According to Ji Kang, Diwu Lun had simply committed an error. Recall how Ji Kang earlier wrote that a lesser wrong is acceptable if one admits to it, but when the greater wrong of concealment is added to the mix, this is not acceptable. Since Diwu Lun openly spoke of the illness of both boys, he was neither being stingy nor exploiting their illness to his advantage.

At this point, Ji Kang delves into the minutia of self-interest, particularly how one can be wrong yet lack self-interest. The mechanism that allows wrongness and openness to coexist is the will, specifically one that does not employ things. Even if the will does not employ things, we cannot say the actions of this person are fully right. Why? Ji Kang's response is unusual: he says the person who is extremely stingy is not equivalent to the person who does not speak. In classical Daoism, not speaking is a good thing: "Those who know do not speak, those who speak do not know."[58] This, however, is not what Ji Kang means. To be stingy is to deliberately withhold something for one's benefit whereas not speaking can, in certain cases, be used to protect another. What is more, stinginess requires employing the will but silence does not. Given this, Ji Kang labels stinginess to be wrong and not employing things to be right. Thus, not employing things is the result of the will not possessing self-praise and the heart-mind being without desire.[59]

This description—lacking self-praise and desire—can only point to one individual: the sage. When Ji Kang writes that the person who is clear about the profound nature of the Dao and acts naturally, he is speaking of the sage. The sage does no wrong because he is one with the Dao. Embracing the One (*baoyi* 抱一) is a phrase derived from the *Daodejing*: "In this way, the sage embraces the One and becomes a model for all under heaven."[60] In Ji Kang's usage, embracing the One is to be without self-interest, and when one lacks self-interest, only the right and good will result. Such being the case, admitting one's wrongs is better than not speaking out of self-interest. This is why Ji Kang argues that in the case of Diwu Lun, though he was wrong to not spend time with his ill son, he openly admitted as much. As he spoke of his rights and wrongs, he cannot be accused of acting out of self-interest. To say he was selfish simply on account of his lesser wrong and not his greater wrong is to confuse the nature of self-interest. With this, Ji Kang concludes his essay.

Notes

1 I have discussed this essay in Chai 2020. Other notable discussions are in French, by Donald Holzman 1957: 122–130, and in Chinese by Pi Yuanzhen 2001; Zhou Daxing 1991; and Wu Huiling.
2 Early Confucians would have learned of this notion from the *Liji*: "They are the rules of propriety, that furnish the means of determining (the observances towards) relatives, as near and remote; of settling points which may cause suspicion or doubt; of distinguishing where there should be agreement, and where difference; and of making clear what is right and what is wrong." *Liji*, chapter 1. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 63.
3 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, Qingfan, 70; Watson, 11. Feng Youlan discusses the importance of this naturalistic approach to distinguishing private and public ethics in Feng, volume 2: 455–456.
4 *Daodejing*, chapter 22. See Lou Yulie, 56; Lynn 1999: 89.
5 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13. See Guo Qingfan, 457; Watson, 98.
6 *Daodejing*, chapter 64. See Lou Yulie, 166; Lynn 1999: 171.
7 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13. See Guo Qingfan, 486; Watson, 106. Watson did not translate "通乎道，合乎德" and so my translation appears in parenthesis.
8 *Heguanzi*, chapter 18. See Huang Huaixin, 362; translation is my own.
9 For more on the explicit connection between names and morality, see Pei Yuanzhen 2001.
10 Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685–643 BCE) ascended the throne with help of his minister Yi Wu 夷吾 (Guan Zhong 管仲). For more, see *Shiji*, book 62: 2131–2138.
11 To better understand the four behavioral models at play in this essay, see Wu Huiling, 107–109.
12 This passage is an excerpt from chapter 13 of the *Daodejing*, which reads: "The reason I suffer such a great calamity is that I am bound by my own person. When I am no longer bound by my own person, what calamity could befall me?" See Lou Yulie, 29; Lynn 1999: 71.
13 This passage repeats the last line of chapter 75 of the *Daodejing*. See Lou Yulie, 184; Lynn 1999: 183.
14 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 7. See Guo Qingfan, 307; Watson, 59.
15 Yi Yin worked with Tang to overthrow the Xia dynasty. When Tang became king of the Shang (Yin 殷) dynasty, Yi Yin was made counselor-in-chief. After Tang's death, Yi Yin served under several other early Shang kings, such as Bu Bing 卜丙, Zhong Ren 中壬, Tai Jia 太甲, and died during the reign of Wo Ding 沃丁. See *Shiji*, book 3: 94.
16 Zhou Dan (i.e., the duke of Zhou 周公旦) was the brother of king Wu of Zhou 周武王, founder of the Zhou dynasty.
17 Guanzi (i.e., Guan Zhong 管仲, d. 645 BCE) held the post of court counselor.
18 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 28. See Guo Qingfan, 977; Watson, 246.
19 *Guanzi*, chapter 39. See Li Xianfeng, 831; Rickett, volume 2: 107.
20 *Tangran* is from chapter 14 of the *Zhuangzi*: "You try to fathom it but can't understand, try to gaze at it but can't see, try to overtake it but can't catch up. You stand dazed before the four-directioned emptiness of the Dao or lean on your desk and moan." See Guo Qingfan, 504; Watson, 110.
21 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 15. See Guo Qingfan, 546; Watson, 121.
22 In the *Lunyu*, Confucius lists five goods (*wu mei* 五美): be benevolent without being wasteful; impose labor upon the people without incurring their resentment; have desires without being covetous; be grand without being arrogant; and be awe-inspiring without being severe. Confucius also mentions four evils (*si e* 四惡): executing the people without having instructed them;

expecting perfection without having warned people when they are about to make a mistake; demanding punctuality without having yourself issued proclamations in a timely fashion; being consistently stingy when it comes to disbursing funds and rewarding people. *Lunyu*, book 20. See Cheng Shude, 1370–1373; Slingerland, 233–234. Confucius was not the only one to create such a list; chapter 31 of the *Zhuangzi* lists eight flaws (*ba ci* 八疵): to do what it is not your business to do; rush forward when no one has nodded in your direction; echo a man's opinions and try to draw him out in speech; speak without regard for what is right and wrong; delight in talking about other men's failings; break up friendships and set kinfolk at odds; falsely and hypocritically to cause injury and evil to others; try to face in two directions at once to steal a glimpse of the other party's wishes. Also in this chapter, Zhuangzi speaks of four harms (*si huan* 四患): be fond of plunging into great undertakings, altering and departing from the old accepted ways, hoping thereby to enhance your merit and fame; claiming to know everything and things must be done your way yet you snatch from others and make them your own; see one's errors yet do not change and listen to the advice of others yet do things even worse; when others agree with you they are approved of but when they disagree with you, they are disapproved of no matter how good they are. See Guo Qingfan, 1029; Watson, 274.

23 *Lunyu*, book 17. See Cheng Shude, 1177; Slingerland, 200.

24 *Lunyu*, book 6. See Cheng Shude, 1185; Slingerland, 59. This line is repeated in the *Lunheng*, chapter 13.

25 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 97; Watson, 15.

26 Li Fu, also known as Touxu 頭須 is mentioned in the *Zuozhuan* entry for duke Xi of Lu 魯僖公 (r. 659–627 BCE). When Ji Kang refers to him, it is based on the following account: "Earlier, Touxu, a young servant of the prince of Jin, Chong'er 重耳, had served as guardian of the storehouse. While the prince was outside the domain, he had stolen from the storehouse and had run away. He had spent all the stolen resources in seeking to secure the prince's return to Jin. When Chong'er entered the domain, Touxu sought an audience. The lord declined this on the pretext that he was washing his hair. Touxu said to a servant, "When one washes one's hair, the heart is upside down. If the heart is upside down, one's thoughts will be topsy-turvy. It is fitting that I have not obtained an audience. Those who remained in the domain were guardians of the altars of the domain, while those who traveled abroad were servants who held bridle and reins. Both alternatives were proper. Why must you blame those who remained in the domain? If the ruler of a domain is going to treat a common fellow like me as an enemy, those filled with dread will be many!" The servant reported this, and the lord made haste to grant Touxu an audience." See Durrant et al., 377.

27 Bodi, also known as eunuch Pi 寺人披, is mentioned in the same *Zuozhuan* entry as Li Fu. Pi had been hired to kill Chong'er but failed. When a second attempt was made on his life, it was Pi who saved him by reporting the uprising. See Durrant et al., 375. For more on Pi's attack, see Durrant et al., 275.

28 Muxian was chief of the eunuchs of Zhao 趙. After discussions with the king about who should deliver an important letter to the king of Qin, Muxian nominated Lin Xiangru 藺相如. When the king asked how they knew one another, Muxian said he admitted to Xiangru that he had committed a crime and was planning to defect to Yan but Lin Xiangru talked him out of it. For more, see *Shiji*, book 81: 2439–2440.

29 Gao Jianli was friends with Jing Ke 荊軻 (d. 227 BCE), the assassin who plotted to kill Ying Zheng 嬴政, king of Qin 秦. When Jing Ke failed, Gao Jianli fled and changed his name. Working in a wine stall, he would listen

to patrons playing the zither and after commenting on one customer's performance, he was asked by the stall owner to play his own piece. A skilled musician, his music brought tears to the owner's eyes. When word of this reached the Qin king, the king invited him to the palace to perform. Wanting to avenge Jing Ke's death, Gao Jianli hid strips of iron inside his zither and when the king was close enough, used them to try and kill him. The king was prepared for this and the assassination attempt was thwarted. Gao Jianli's music was so moving that the king spared his life but had Gao's eyes removed as punishment. See *Shiji*, book 86: 2536–2537.

30 *Daodejing*, chapter 71. See Lou Yulie, 178; Lynn 1999: 178.

31 I concur with Robert Henricks that the text here is corrupt and that *sifei* 似非 should be *sishi* 似是. See Henricks 1983: 113.

32 Again following Robert Henricks, *sishi* 似是 should be read as *sifei* 似非 to reflect the reversing of positions from the previous sentence. See Henricks 1983: 133.

33 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 17. See Guo Qingfan, 574; Watson, 129.

34 *Xunzi*, chapter 2. See Wang Xianqian, 24; Hutton, 11.

35 *Lunheng*, chapter 33. See Huang Hui, 519; Forke, volume 2: 45.

36 *Huainanzi*, chapter 20. See He Ning, 1395; Major et al., 810.

37 This refers to a story in the *Zhanguo Ce* 戰國策 where a cheating wife attempted to poison her husband but was stopped by his concubine.

38 Wang Ling 王陵 and Chen Ping 陳平 served in the court of empress dowager Lü 吕太后 (r. 187–179 BCE). See *Shiji*, book 9: 395–412 and book 56: 2051–2064, respectively.

39 See *Guiguzi*, chapter 16. See Xu Fuhong, 150; Wu Hui, 95.

40 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. See Guo Qingfan, 24; Watson, 3.

41 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 4. See Guo Qingfan, 135; Watson, 22.

42 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 5. See Guo Qingfan, 216–217; Watson, 40.

43 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 16. See Guo Qingfan, 548; Watson, 122.

44 *Lunyu*, book 5. See Cheng Shude, 348; Slingerland, 50.

45 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 63; Watson, 10.

46 The *Zhuangzi* discusses shadows in chapters 27 and 31. See Guo Qingfan, 959–960 and 1031 respectively. Whereas the *Zhuangzi* uses shadows to illustrate the mutual dependency of things onto-cosmologically, Ji Kang's application is strictly moral.

47 The story in the *Zhuangzi* reads as follows: "Once there was a man who was afraid of his shadow and who hated his footprints, and so he tried to get away from them by running. But the more he lifted his feet and put them down again, the more footprints he made. And no matter how fast he ran, his shadow never left him, and so, thinking that he was still going too slowly, he ran faster and faster without a stop until his strength gave out and he fell down dead. He didn't understand that by lolling in the shade he could have gotten rid of his shadow and that by resting in quietude he could have put an end to his footprints. How could he have been so stupid!" See *Zhuangzi*, chapter 31. See Guo Qingfan, 1031; Watson, 275.

48 Shen Hou served king Wen of Chu 楚文王 (r. 689–677 BCE) and the story of his demise appears in the entry of the seventh year of duke Xi of Chen 陳僖公 (r. 659–627 BCE): "In summer, Zheng put to death Shen Hou in order to seek favor with Qi and also because he had slandered Yuan Taotu of Chen. Earlier, Shen Hou, who was born of a woman from Shen, had found favor with king Wen of Chu. When king Wen was about to die, he gave him a jade disk and urged him to leave the domain, saying, "I alone understand you. You monopolize all the benefits yet are never sated. From me you have taken, from me you have sought, yet I have not found fault with you. But my

successor will seek much from you, and you most certainly will not escape trouble." See Durrant et al., 245.

49 Chancellor Pi was forced by Goujian, king of Yue 越王句踐 (r. 495–465 BCE), to convince the king of Wu 吳王 to make peace with them, which he did. Later, when Wu asked Yue for peace, no such deal was made and chancellor Pi was put to death. For more, see *Shiji*, book 41: 1739–1745.

50 Ji Kang is referring to Shen Hou and chancellor Pi whom he alluded to above.

51 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 83; Watson, 13.

52 *Daodejing*, chapter 41. See Lou Yulie, 111; Lynn 1999: 131.

53 To see the various ways Ji Kang uses the notions of open and private as measures of the gentleman, see Zhou Daxing 1991: 31–33.

54 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 5. See Guo Qingfan, 221; Watson, 40–41.

55 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 66; Watson, 10.

56 The term *tandang* 坦蕩 (generosity) appears in the *Lunyu*, book 7: "The gentleman is self-possessed and relaxed, while the petty man is perpetually full of worry." See Cheng Shude, 504; Slingerland, 77. *Tandang* can also be found in the *Lunheng*.

57 Diwu Lun's exact dates are unknown, however, according to the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書, he was a high-ranking minister in the Eastern Han court. For a detailed account of his life, see De Crespigny, 145–146.

58 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13. See Guo Qingfan, 489; Watson, 106.

59 We see this attitude expressed in the letters Ji Kang wrote to Shan Tao 山濤 and Lü Xun 呂巽 terminating his friendship with them. For more, see Jansen, 355–361; Wang and Fu, 241–360; Xu Gongchi, 59–67; and Holzman 1957: 46.

60 *Daodejing*, chapter 22. See Lou Yulie, 56; Lynn 1999: 89.

3 Learning

On Wisdom and Courage 明膽論

by Ji Kang

Section 1

Here is master Lü, a man having a refined sense of rightness who studies the Dao, and who examines the minutiae of right and wrong. He believes a person of courage can be without wisdom, yet one who is wise will also be courageous. Master Ji believes wisdom and courage have different uses and cannot give rise to one another.

Although Lü An 呂安 is cast as the Confucian protagonist in this essay, Ji Kang's description of him as someone having a "refined sense of rightness" (*jingyi* 精義)[1] and who is keen to learn about the Dao is rather telling. Given the term *jingyi* only appears in one philosophical text prior to Ji Kang, he clearly had that occurrence in mind when he said: "When a refined sense of rightness enters the spirit, one can extend its application to its furthest."[2] Despite the compliment, Ji Kang in the same breath criticizes Lü An—hence his role as protagonist—for an apparent fascination with the concepts of right and wrong (*shifei* 是非). The model for such an attack is found in the *Zhuangzi*, where Huizi 惠子, Mozi 墨子, and Gongsun Long 公孫龍 are disparaged for their one-sided thinking and linguistic absurdity while Zhuangzi's "sage harmonizes both right and wrong and rests in heaven the equalizer."[3] Ji Kang raises this fault of Lü An in order to set the stage for the discussion that follows and, based on his claim that wisdom and courage do not give rise to one another, that their source lies beyond the human realm.

Section 2

My argument is this: When primal breath was molded and cast, the multitude received it and were born.

DOI: 10.4324/9780429331428-3

One would expect the concept of "primal breath" (*yuan qi* 元氣) to be prevalent in the early texts of China but it is not; instead, we find it populating the *Lunheng*, an example of which reads: "Men receive the vital fluid [*qi*] from heaven at their birth, and are all given a fate fixing the length of their lives, in accordance to which their bodies exist for a longer or shorter period."[4] The *Heguanzi* provides us with an alternative yet equally insightful illustration: "Thus heaven and earth are completed in primal *qi*, the myriad things ride upon heaven and earth, the spirit and sage ride upon the Dao and its virtue."[5] By framing wisdom and courage as a question of *qi*-cosmology, as opposed to ethics or politics, Ji Kang not only puts Lü An's interest in studying the Dao to the test but, more importantly, doing so allows him to apply the nature-based arguments seen in his other essays to the topic at hand.

As breath is bestowed and received in differing amounts, so there are people whose talent and nature are either dark or bright. Only the ultimate person is unique in his purity and beauty, conjoining the external and internal, such that everything is complete [in him]. Moving down from here, everyone seems deficient. Some may be wise in perceiving things while others may be brave in making decisions. The human emotions of greed and honesty have their limits. Take, for example, grass and trees—their distinction lies in their difference. To combine their traits is to broadly know things, but to be partial is to merely preserve a person's allotment. I thus say that wisdom and courage are different breaths and cannot give rise to one another.

With the Dao's breath spread amongst the myriad things, the amount each receives directly impacts their inborn nature and skills. When we compare the *qi*-cosmology of Ji Kang with that of a pre-Han text such as the *Zhuangzi*, we notice that both uphold the idea that breath emanates from the Dao and that the myriad things of the universe come to life because of it; however, pre-Han texts do not make the correlation between a person's breath and their talent. The story of Zhuangzi ruminating upon the death of his wife is a succinct illustration: "In the midst of the jumble of wonder and mystery, a change took place and she had a spirit. Another change and she had a body. Another change and she was born."[6] And yet, for thinkers in the Han dynasty and later, the sage's unique ability to selflessly blend with the world, never allowing the worries and strife therein to corrupt his harmony with the Dao, is proof that he possesses a breath unlike any other.

Indeed, in Section 2 of his essay *On Nourishing Life*, Ji Kang says the sage "specifically receives a different breath and are naturally endowed with it; it is not the result of accumulated study." Further evidence that Ji Kang was not alone in linking breath to an individual's personality can be found in the *Lunheng*, which says: "The fluid [*qi*] men are endowed with, is either copious or deficient, and their character correspondingly good or bad."[7]

Ji Kang, however, is not especially concerned with the common person but emulating the ways of the Daoist sage, that paradigmatic figure who knows how to live life to its utmost and natural potential. The sagacious individual was not limited to Daoism however; Ji Kang throughout his essays speaks of the Confucian gentleman or, when it suits him, uses terminology derived from the texts of Confucianism. For example, when he writes "moving down from here, everyone seems deficient" the expression "*gai que ru ye* 盖闕如也" is actually from the *Lunyu*, which says: "When it comes to matters that he does not understand, the gentleman should remain silent."[8] Even though there are things the sage or gentleman does not know, they do not force themselves to speak of it but are content to preserve their silent harmony with the Dao. In the words of the *Zhuangzi*, "understanding that rests in what it does not understand is the finest."[9]

Ji Kang's declaration that the sage is uniquely pure and beautiful marks a transition from discussing breath in an onto-cosmological sense to its physical manifestation in the form of human wisdom and courage. The personhood of the sage thus represents a kind of osmotic filter whereby the constant inflow of cosmic breath purifies any residual, human-centric preferences and norms, maintaining his oneness with the world and the Dao. Such being the case, Ji Kang writes, there is nothing the sage lacks. The unequal distribution of breath in the common people results in the skewed development of their personality; however, what they are unaware of is that the traits comprising their character have limits that are directly proportional to the breath they receive before their birth. As the *Zhuangzi* poetically states: "Things have their limits—the so-called limits of things. The unlimited moves to the realm of limits; the limited moves to the unlimited realm."[10] To look upon the limit of a thing from the perspective of another thing is to simply use one constraint to judge another, what Ji Kang refers to as the distinction between grass and trees. If the goal is to go beyond these limits—to see the grass and trees as sharing the same primal breath—we must recognize that even breath is limited, hence the sage works on preserving his oneness with the Dao. Speaking of grass and trees, Ji Kang's use of "*pizhu caomu* 譬諸草木" is another phrase borrowed from the *Lunyu* and as is the case here, the *Lunyu* uses it to indicate the non-discriminating perspective of the sage:

> Whose disciples will be the first to be taught the Dao of the gentleman, and then in the end grow tired of it? It is like the grass and the trees: you make distinctions between them according to their kind.[11]

With wisdom, a person can perceive things; with courage, a person can make decisions. Should a person have wisdom but lack courage, although they can perceive things, they will be unable to make decisions. Should a person have courage but lack wisdom, they will violate this norm and lose the moment. Thus, Zijia[12] *was weak and tricked into murdering his ruler, while the master of the left proved hesitant and*

so was coerced by Hua Chen.[13] *These are instances of sufficient intelligence but lacking in decisive action. This principle is obvious and should raise no objections, hence I have merely raised one corner of it and assume you will have no doubts about the rest.*

Since Ji Kang holds that wisdom and courage are different manifestations of primal breath, they foster equally different, yet not wholly independent, abilities: wisdom is rendered as perception while courage is concretized in the form of decisive action. As we will see in Section 4, Ji Kang's argument is that wisdom can carry courage to fruition but courage cannot do so for wisdom. Why is this the case? Given Lü An will soon argue that a person can only respond to what is factual or perceivable, the bodiless holism of the Daoist sage offers Ji Kang an attractive vantage point from which to preemptively attack him. Being someone who harmonizes right and wrong, recognizes the light while preserving the dark, the sage perceives the world not with his eyes but with his spirit: "Today, I let my spirit guide me, not my eyes. My physical functions cease, giving way to my spirit."[14]

The reason Daoism prefers spirit over rational knowledge is explainable by citing yet another passage from the *Zhuangzi*:

> The Yin and Yang shine on each other, maim each other, heal each other … that which words can adequately describe, that which understanding can reach to, extends only as far as the level of 'things,' no further. The man who looks to the Dao does not try to track down what has disappeared, does not try to trace the source of what springs up. This is the point at which debate comes to a stop.[15]

In a similar fashion, the *Huainanzi* writes: "If the spirit has no obstruction and the [heart-] mind has no burden … wisdom cannot move them; courage cannot frighten them; this is the Dao of the genuine."[16]

Although wisdom is associated with Yin and courage with Yang, knowledge of Yin and Yang is not equal to that of wisdom and courage insofar as the latter are matters particular to humans and outside the purview of the Dao, while the former are authentic outgrowths of the Dao and essential to things the world over. The sage, being aware of this, thus possesses knowledge but does not feel compelled to act upon it; conversely, the person of courage is obligated to act on their knowledge because not doing so will be seen as a sign of irresoluteness. When it comes to being sufficient in knowledge but lacking in a trait other than courage, the *Lunyu* offers this bit of advice: "If your wisdom reaches it, but your goodness cannot protect it, then even though you may have attained it, you are sure to eventually lose it."[17]

Returning to Ji Kang, scholars have long pointed out the connection between the arguments in *On Wisdom and Courage* and those of Liu Shao 刘劭 in his *Renwuzhi* 人物志.[18] Recall that Ji Kang said wisdom and

courage are different yet arise from primal breath in a manner similar to Yin and Yang. The opening chapter of *Renwuzhi* also speaks of a primal source to which the roots of Yin and Yang can be traced: "All living beings contain a profound unity which gives them substance. The Yin and Yang endow them with natures. The five elements embody their form."[19] Having determined Yin and Yang play an indispensable role in the formation of human nature, Liu Shao, in a chapter dedicated to the traits of bravery (*ying* 英) and fierceness (*xiong* 雄), correlates them with wisdom and courage in a manner not dissimilar to what Ji Kang says in this section and will expand upon in Section 4. Liu Shao's initial statement reads: "Those whose wisdom is outstanding are *ying*. Those whose courage and strength are superior to other men's are *xiong*."[20] He elaborates thusly:

> Wisdom is the part belonging to *ying*. If it does not possess the courage of *xiong*, its persuasion will not succeed. Courage is the part belonging to *xiong*. If it does not possess the wisdom of *ying*, its affairs will not be established. Therefore *ying* uses its wisdom to plan the beginning, and uses its illumination to see the pivot. But it waits for the courage of *xiong* to act. *Xiong* uses its strength to subdue the multitude; and its courage to push over difficulties. But it waits till the wisdom of *ying* enables it to succeed.[21]

Liu Shao's ideas of wisdom and courage not only exerted great sway over thinkers in the Han dynasty, but those in Ji Kang's time as well.

Besides Ji Kang, nearly every thinker in the Wei 魏 dynasty had something to say about "talent and nature" (*caixing* 才性).[22] Without going into detail, we can simply state that discourses on talent and nature comprised four positions: the first, by Fu Gu 傅嘏, advocated they were identical (*tong* 同); the second position took them to be different (*yi* 異), and was put forward by Li Feng 李丰; Zhong Hui 鍾會 offered a third stance, that they come together (*he* 合), while Wang Guang 王廣 stated they depart from one another (*li* 離). These four views were compiled by Zhong Hui in his *Caixing Siben lun* 才性四本論. Unfortunately, this work was lost not too long afterwards and the only record we have of these thinkers and their positions in this debate are fragments found in the *Shishuo Xinyu* 世說新語 and their biographical entries in the *History of the Three Kingdoms*.[23] Needless to say, Ji Kang's *On Wisdom and Courage* marks his foray into this forum, albeit with a Daoist-inspired twist.

Ji Kang ends this section with a rather presumptuous declaration: "I have merely raised one corner of it and assume you will have no doubts about the rest." The phrase "raise one corner" (*ju yi yu* 舉一隅) is also seen in his essay *Music has in it neither Grief nor Joy*, however, an earlier occurrence appears in the *Lunyu*:

> I will not open the door for a mind that is not already striving to understand, nor will I provide words to a tongue that is not already

> struggling to speak. If I hold up one corner of a problem, and the student cannot come back to me with the other three, I will not attempt to instruct him again.[24]

The tone taken by Ji Kang serves two purposes: literally, it testifies to his personality; stylistically, it clears the way for Lü An's rebuttal and Ji Kang's subsequent response. One might also say that Ji Kang's breadcrumbs are a test of his readers too; those who are conversant with Daoism will immediately grasp the full extent of Ji Kang's inclinations while, conversely, those of a non-Daoist bent will require the other "three corners" to be laid forth so as to complete the gaps in their understanding. Whatever the case may be, Lü An will most certainly find fault with Ji Kang's opening volley of arguments, prompting him to revisit his initial remarks and substantiate them with more concrete material.

Section 3

Lü An replied: I have respectfully examined your discussion and agree nothing can be added to it. Your analysis of this principle is restrained and covers every condition, so why do you still drift in the dirty and absurd? In your discussion, you use the analogy of primal turbidity but it is so remote and illusory. Thus, my reply will be direct and use what is pertinent to human affairs.

A straightforward beginning to his reply, yet Lü An in no uncertain terms states he plans to rebut Ji Kang utilizing real-world examples and avoid abstruse metaphors such as "primal turbidity" (*hunyuan* 渾元).[25] The phrase *hunyuan* is an alternative name for cosmic breath and while this specific terminology can be traced to works such as the *Lunheng*—"The commentators of the *Yijing* say that previous to the separation of the primogenial vapors [*qi*] there was a chaotic and uniform mass"[26]—the idea that the universe is derived from the undividedness of the Dao is far more prevalent in the *Daodejing*—"The Dao begets the One; the One begets two; two beget three; and three beget the myriad things. The myriad things, bearing Yin and embracing Yang, form a unified harmony through the fusing of these vital forces"[27]—and the *Zhuangzi*, which says: "Thus, the sage wanders in the realm where things cannot get away from him, and all are preserved."[28] All of the above, for Lü An, constitute the "dirty and absurd" but let us not forget that Ji Kang described him as "a man having a refined sense of rightness who studies the Dao." If Lü An's first reaction to Ji Kang's opening argument is to dismiss it for being too lofty, either he is not as Daoist as Ji Kang makes him out to be, or he is deliberately being coy in order to launch a delayed attack against Ji Kang. Either way, Lü An's declaration that he will only use arguments "pertinent to human affairs" awaits us, so let us proceed to it now.

In the Han there was Mr. Jia,[29] *whose plans showed a pointed directness, and whose words were rousing yet extremely dangerous. He acted without self-doubt because he used wisdom to examine things. When he feared an owl and wrote a rhapsody on it, it was because his ignorance confused him. How is it that a person's courage can both advance and retreat? Since there are things seen and unseen, some actions thus bear fruit while others do not.*

From the above, it would seem that Lü An is not questioning Jia Yi's 賈誼 intellectual prowess, for he was certainly a gifted individual; rather, Lü An's criticism stems from what he takes to be Jia Yi's irrational belief in the supernatural, a view that further substantiates his scorn for Ji Kang's *qi*-cosmology. Knowing Jia Yi's personal history, is Lü An justified in calling him out for such minor lapses in judgment? If we take the following passage from the *Lunyu* as our standard, the answer will be yes: "When the state possesses the Dao, be audaciously correct in both word and action; when the state lacks the Dao, be audaciously correct in action, but let one's speech be conciliatory."[30] If, however, we take Ji Kang as our standard, Lü An is no better than Jia Yi insofar as both are chasing a false Dao. In the words of the *Zhuangzi*: "The torch of chaos and doubt—this is what the sage steers by. So he does not use things but relegates all to the constant. This is what it means to use clarity."[31]

Ji Kang's view of wisdom aligns with this *Zhuangzi* passage, however, Lü An's notion of wisdom is far narrower: it neither pertains to the intangible (e.g., cosmic breath) nor includes that which defies human reason (e.g., superstition). Jia Yi's encounter with the owl, Lü An says, is evidence of ignorance overpowering the courage to act in a manner fully in concert with one's wisdom. If Jia Yi can offer powerfully evocative speeches at court and move with an air of confidence seen in no one but the emperor, how is a lowly owl capable of bringing him to his knees? In Lü An's mind, Jia Yi seeing the owl, and recognizing it for what it was (i.e., a bird, not an evil spirit), should have been enough for him to act without hesitation; that he did not is evidence of his flawed courage. As we shall soon see, Lü An's thesis—that the absence of wisdom does not entail an absence of courage—is wholly rooted in the human world and is utterly devoid of metaphysical intonations.

Zijia and the minister of the left were both foolish and confused, superficial and corrupt, and their wisdom failed to thoroughly penetrate things. Thus, they were confused by the obscure and ultimately fell upon misfortune and injury. How is it that wisdom can clearly look upon and examine things while courage remains hesitant? Thus, Huo Guang[32] *carried in his breast an air of deep bravery, enacting the duties of the head general, but battled [with himself] over the matter of king He.*[33] *Yannian*[34] *was a man of culture who had no previous reputation for valor and strength, yet his pronouncements on rightness contained rousing words such that his aura of courage reached to the clouds. This is the evidence.*

Lü An's counterargument continues to be directed against Jia Yi, and the minister of the left is thrown in for good measure. Using language that sounds very much like what Zhuangzi would say about Confucius, Lü An is not necessarily trying to slander Jia Yi, for if this were his only purpose, there would be no need to speak of the sacrifice made by Fan Yuqi in the next section of his reply; rather, the target of his vitriol is the *qi* beclouding Jia Yi and the minister of the left's judgment. Their wisdom failed to expose the matter-of-fact nature of the world, blindly putting faith in the obscure arts of the Dao. Not comprehending what they were seeing, the bedazzlement Jia Yi and the minister of the left felt led to their personal disaster and injury. As Ji Kang will argue in his follow-up to Lü An's remarks, the notion that wisdom cannot extend beyond the physical, visible world of things into the intangible, mysterious world of the Dao is fallacious: the former is merely a webbing together of things on a superficial level while the latter is the hidden matrix fertilizing said web.[35] For Lü An, the beclouding of wisdom is to blame for Jia Yi's weak disposition; had the latter's courage rose to the occasion and rescued his flailing wisdom, disaster could have been avoided. In other words, wisdom is not the be-all and end-all of a person's nature—courage props it up when needed and steps into wisdom's shoes when the situation requires. The examples of Huo Guang 霍光 and Tian Yannian 田延年 demonstrate this.

Huo Guang's aura of courage was well-known and it served him well in acting upon the general's orders; however, when it came to employing said courage to chastise the king for his outlandish behavior, Huo Guang faltered. This is a case of knowing one should act to address a real situation, as opposed to Jia Yi's imaginary one, yet not doing so out of fear of something untoward happening (i.e., being reprimanded or punished by the king). For Jia Yi, the owl's symbolism far exceeded its actual power as a bird of prey; the psychological lore Jia Yi had to grapple with thus smothered his ability to see the owl for what it was. Conversely, Huo Guang's courage flowed freely whenever he carried out the commands of the king because in doing so, he was physically partaking in the power of the royal court. Facing the king himself, however, and the question of whether or not to support his removal, Huo Guang succumbed to his psychological need to appear loyal and so refrained from acting. Thus, Jia Yi's wisdom let down his courage whereas Huo Guang's courage was tempered by his wisdom; the former is a case of foolishness while the latter is a case of intelligence.

Turning to Yannian, Lü An's description is the inverse of Huo Guang: Yannian was not known for his bravery but people felt an upwelling of boldness after hearing him speak; he was not known for embracing lofty ideals but people felt nothing was beyond their reach after meeting him. Given Yannian's uncanny ability to sway others to change their ways, one is reminded of the story of the sheep butcher in the *Zhuangzi* who also made "pronouncements on rightness" (*chen yi* 陳義): "The king [Zhao of Chu 楚昭王] said to Ziqi, his minister of war, 'The sheep butcher Yue

is a man of mean and humble position, and yet his pronouncements on righteousness are lofty indeed! I want you to promote him to one of the 'three banners' offices.'"[36] Zhuangzi's story is not about courage but how knowledge of the Dao has the ability to transform others. Lü An's support for Yannian is, of course, not an endorsement of Daoism but an attempt to convince Ji Kang that clear-sighted wisdom can pave the way for a form of courage that is decidedly more noble than pure brute force. Yannian is not the sole example of valiant conduct, Fan Yuqi and Wang Ling's mother are further instances and both fall into the category of "wise and resolute" (明果 *ming guo*) persons, the topic of the next section of Lü An's reply.

When it comes to Qi giving up his head and Ling's mother lying on her sword, they belong to the category of wise and resolute. There are countless examples of this kind, thus if we wanted to make a detailed record of them, we would be unable to list them all. How many more would there be if we included those who see a flat road but dare not walk on it, or those who ascend a pathway to the clouds and doubt they will reach a state of great clarity? If someone from the class of foolish and fraudulent, out of care for themselves, stays in places that are dim and murky, risking their body in snares and pits, then, like robber Zhi who hid himself in a tiger's mouth, or the thief who breaches a wall but ends up head-first in a drain or gutter, they might be fierce enough to grasp a tiger or wade through a river, but such individuals belong to the class of foolish and brave.

Having pointed out that Fan Yuqi 樊於期[37] and Wang Ling's 王陵 mother[38] are paradigmatic examples of gallant and righteous conduct informed by a strong understanding of events, Lü An speaks of them no more, saying they are part of a group whose numbers are too large to count. As large as this group may be, however, there is an even greater one containing people who are foolish and fraudulent (*yu bi* 愚弊). These individuals dare not venture onto a flat road, nor do they believe that ascending a steep mountain path to the clouds will bring them a greater sense of clarity. The phrase "great clarity" (*taiqing* 泰清) is not only the name of a fictional character in the *Zhuangzi*,[39] it is one of several ways Zhuangzi refers to the original and undifferentiated state of the universe.[40] Lü An's use of the term can be read in one of two ways: he is either taking it literally to mean a physical broadening of one's worldview, or he is using it metaphorically in the sense of intellectual or spiritual awakening. Seeing as it is Lü An speaking and not Ji Kang, the former is the more likely of the two. Besides, how can one not feel wiser and more courageous when looking down on the world from on high?

What is worse, however, are people from this class of individuals who egregiously display their bravery for no other reason than to claim they have it. Lü An refers to these people as "foolish and brave" (*yu gan* 愚敢) and provides two examples, both of which are from the *Zhuangzi*. Before

discussing them, however, it should be said that the *Zhuangzi* is very clear about misguided displays of bravado: "great daring does not attack."[41] People of a foolish and fraudulent nature, Lü An writes, dwell in the dim and murky (*you mei* 幽昧) and endanger their bodies by running into snares and pits (*xian jing* 穽穽). The *Zhuangzi* uses dim and murky to describe the Dao but Lü An uses them here to describe people's beliefs and actions: the foolish are ignorant while the fraudulent ply their trade in the shadows. As a result, the former are ensnared by their partial views while the latter are trapped in the pits they create from their own deceptive behavior. Such ideas are not exclusive to Daoism but are commonplace in early Confucian texts such as the *Mengzi*, *Xunzi*, and *Zhongyong* 中庸 which writes: "Men all say, we are wise; but being driven forward and taken in a net, a trap, or a pitfall, they know not how to escape."[42]

Lü An's speaking of robber Zhi (*daozhi* 盜跖) is interesting insofar as Ji Kang does not mention him in any of his essays. Robber Zhi is famously associated with the *Zhuangzi*—specifically chapter 29,[43] the first third of which is devoted to him—however, he also appears in book 6B of the *Mengzi*, and in several texts postdating the *Zhuangzi*, such as the *Xunzi*, *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, and *Lunheng*. There is no mention in any early text of robber Zhi directly placing his head inside a tiger's mouth. It would appear, therefore, that Lü An is taking liberties with the original account to suit his debate with Ji Kang. The story involves Confucius paying robber Zhi a visit. Having just been harshly scolded by Zhi, Confucius takes his leave and runs into Liuxia Ji 柳下季, Zhi's older brother, who asks him about his encounter. Confucius replied: "You might say that I gave myself the burning moxa treatment when I wasn't even sick. I went rushing off to pat the tiger's head and braid its whiskers—and very nearly didn't manage to escape from its jaws."[44] The irony of Lü An including robber Zhi in his response is that while he is widely villainized in Confucian texts, and mocked here for his reckless daring, the *Zhuangzi* casts him as someone who has gained true insight into human nature and sees with open eyes the folly of Confucius' Dao.[45]

The second example given by Lü An is the thief who bores holes into the walls of people's houses in order to rob them. The language used by Lü An (*chuan yu* 穿窬) is a slight modification of the expression "*chuan yu zhi dao* 穿窬之盜" from chapter 29 of the *Liji*, and this passage from the *Lunyu*: "To assume a severe expression while being weak inside—is this not, to take an analogy from the common classes, like breaking into a home in order to commit burglary?"[46] We also read of creating holes in walls in the *Zhuangzi*, albeit in two different senses. The first utilizes the physicality mentioned by Lü An and the *Lunyu* passage—tunneling into houses, prying open doors[47]—while the second attests to a metaphorical application whereby the debates of the sage-kings Yao and Shun "are like a man who goes around willfully poking holes in people's walls and fences and planting weeds and brambles in them."[48] With his historical evidence laid out for Ji Kang to see, Lü An proceeds to his conclusion.

It is thus that I say when wisdom is lacking, courage can stand on its own. The coherency of this norm is easy to comprehend and further examples are unnecessary. I will, therefore, not refer to distant things or draw upon complex words. If you cannot return with the other three corners and have remaining doubts, I welcome your instructions and will promptly offer my reply.

It is here, in the final lines of his rebuttal, that Lü An, without elaboration, lets his argument stand on this pronouncement.[49] Recall that Ji Kang ended his discussion in Section 2 by saying he had merely raised one corner and that it was up to Lü An to fill-in the remaining three. Lü An ends his own discussion by inverting Ji Kang's formula: he implies that the first corner has been outlined and explicitly asks Ji Kang to return with the other three (*fan san yu* 反三隅). Such being the case, what is courage tasked with that allows it to occupy one of the four corners? First and foremost, it defends wisdom, the second corner, against those who are foolish and either fraudulent or brave. This allows for the class of wise and resolute to persist, the third corner. Finally, the fourth corner is occupied by those who use wisdom to deeply examine things so as not to be confused by what they do not see. In other words, wisdom and courage stand in two corners and reflect off one another in the middle to create the remaining two; they are not separate occurrences of breath as Ji Kang argues but two co-dependent aspects of what Confucius holds to be the inborn nature of the gentleman.

Section 4

Ji Kang replied: As for discussing the norms of human dispositions, analyzing and dissecting differences and similarities, one must surely seek the source of that which we receive and press forward to the cause of breath's division. If one follows it from beginning to its end, all will be in accordance; now, however, you wish to lay aside what is muddy and distant and solely gather what can be seen. This is to enjoy working out the underlying mesh of things and detest upholding their guiding principle.

Lü An began his counterargument by opposing Ji Kang's reference to primal breath, announcing he will only discuss what is pertinent to human affairs. Turning their roles around, Ji Kang's subsequent opposition to Lü An stems from the latter's overlooking the source of said affairs (i.e., breath). Ji Kang does not explicitly use the word "source" or "root" (*ben* 本, *gen* 根) but it is implied. Indeed, the source of the natural world, or that which grounds human affairs, has been expressed in a variety of ways in ancient China. For example, in the *Liji*, we are told that

> Thus it was that when the sages would make rules (for men), they felt it necessary to find the origin (of all things) in heaven and earth; to make the two forces (of nature) the commencement (of all); to use the four seasons as the handle (of their arrangements).[50]

The *Mengzi* states that "the empire has its basis in the state; the state has its basis in the family, and the family has its basis in oneself."[51] This hierarchical relationship is echoed in the *Guanzi*: "The realm is based on the state, the state on the district, the district on the household, the household on the individual, individuals on the self, and the self on good discipline."[52] Finally, in the *Zhuangzi*, we are told that "he who has a clear understanding of the virtue of heaven and earth may be called the great source, the great ancestor."[53]

Lü An's stance is not only at odds with the above views, it makes him appear superficial next to Ji Kang. To blindly follow the outward appearance of things not only places one in physical danger (i.e., snares and pits) but, in the words of the *Daodejing*, deprives one of life-nourishment:

> The five colors make one's eyes blind; the five notes make one's ears deaf; the five flavors makes one's mouth fail … This is why the sage provides for the belly but not for the eye. Thus he rejects the one and keeps the other.[54]

Allowing oneself to follow that from which primal breath self-divides, and doing so without resistance, will ensure one's life unfolds in accordance with its guiding principle. This principle *qua* natural order/coherence (*li* 理) is none other than the profound and obscure Dao.

Interestingly, Ji Kang does not use the term mystery (*xuan* 玄) which populates the *Daodejing*, *Zhuangzi*, and other Daoist texts. In fact, the word *xuan* does not appear in any of Ji Kang's essays; alternatively, *ming* 冥 (dark, profound), which is widely used in texts from the Han dynasty and earlier, appears only once in Ji Kang's writings, specifically in his reply to Xiang Xiu's refutation of his essay *On Nourishing Life*.[55] Be this as it may, Ji Kang's allusion to the Dao is unmistakable.

This brings us to the last sentence in this opening paragraph and Ji Kang's damning criticism of Lü An: he is merely concerned with the mesh of things and ignores the guiding principle grounding them. How can Lü An, an admitted admirer of the Dao, overlook that which envelops and nurtures all things? As an admirer of the Dao, how can he readily dismiss its ineffable and remote nature? Could it be that Lü An is no different from the group of foolish and fraudulent people he belittled in his counter-argument? If we take the following passage from the *Zhuangzi* as our standard, the answer would appear to be yes: "In knowing the Dao, one will arrive at its guiding norms, and having arrived at these guiding norms, one will grasp different situations."[56]

Lü An, however, is very much a Confucian at heart, making him the perfect adversary for Ji Kang. Thus, while Ji Kang devotes his attention to the source grounding all things, Lü An feels things are grounded by the very mesh that links them together. The phrase "uphold their guiding principle" (*chi gangling* 持綱領) is not of Ji Kang's creation but is derived from a very similar expression found in the *Lunheng*: "Those having power in the world today are very talented and deeply knowledgeable. They clearly understand all manner of things, such that each is taken up in the proper way and affairs are carried out with certainty."[57] By raising the importance of the cause of breath's division and the guiding norms underlying it at the opening of his reply to Lü An, Ji Kang is foretelling readers what they can expect for the remainder of his remarks, which will both revisit the historical persons mentioned by Lü An before reiterating why he thinks Yin and Yang are connected to wisdom and courage.

My argument is that the two breaths are different and that wisdom does not give birth to courage. If we want to discuss this issue in a substantial way, we can cite the person who is banished yet lacks the courage to mock [those responsible], despite comprehending the situation at hand. In such a case, lack of resolve leads to injury. This is not to say such a person is mediocre and lacking in valor, for they are naturally endowed with wisdom. If the two breaths are present in the same body, then wisdom can move courage. Jia Yi is such a case.

Having earlier declared wisdom and courage are different manifestations of breath, Ji Kang now explains why. Unlike Lü An, who ridiculed Jia Yi for letting ignorance get the better of him, Ji Kang treats him as a shining example of the power of wisdom to uplift and move courage. Furthermore, whereas Lü An believes courage can stand on its own should wisdom prove insufficient, Ji Kang yet again takes a different path, arguing that it falls to wisdom to push courage into action or hold it back. A case in point is the person who has been banished and is expected to retaliate by mocking those responsible yet does not have the courage to publicly do so. The result is they suffer from their indecisiveness. Arguing against labeling said persons as mediocre and without courage, Ji Kang instead emphasizes their wisdom of self-restraint. Jia Yi is cited as representative because although he was banished to Changsha 長沙, he remained loyal to the emperor and did not openly speak ill of him. Having been rewarded with a new post, it was only when the second prince under his care accidentally died that Jia Yi drew upon his courage and took responsibility for this tragedy by ending his own life. Ji Kang will have more to say about Jia Yi in the next section of his reply.

Before examining what Ji Kang says, we are again reminded that wisdom and courage are not the same manifestations of breath, and that the former is incapable of giving birth to the latter. What is newly added

to the argument is the notion that humans are naturally endowed with wisdom. This wisdom, however, is not the knowledge accrued by reading books or repeating a sequence of actions; rather, it is akin to the heart-mind of the sage which Ji Kang in the opening lines of his essay *On Dispelling Self-Interest* depicts as "not employing right and wrong, and whose actions do not oppose the Dao." Such sagely wisdom will be referred to by Ji Kang as "ultimate wisdom" (*zhiming* 至明), placing it on the level of the Dao, and it will be paired with "ultimate courage" (*zhidan* 至膽). Before we get ahead of ourselves though, it will suffice to say that wisdom allows one's heart-mind to penetrate and comprehend things while courage is what the body uses to put said wisdom into action.

Jia Yi's wisdom and courage were self-sufficient and interconnected, and so he proved to be of great use in affairs. Who claimed he had utterly no courage and relied solely on wisdom to conduct affairs? These words are solely of your own making for the purpose of matching your argument. His fear of the owl was [a sign of] dark confusion and not something encompassed by his wisdom. How could it impair his courage? If wisdom understands things, courage can then act upon it. How can courage prevent all that wisdom does not see? If advancing and retreating assist one another, why do we call it waxing and waning? Speaking in this manner, when Mr. Jia revealed his plans, he saw things using his wisdom; when he feared the owl and wrote his rhapsody, he was confused by darkness. That his wisdom was previously penetrating while his darkness was later confusing shows that wisdom waxes and wanes. If wisdom has its advancement and retreat, why is courage not able to stand on its own?

Having just declared wisdom and courage were both present in Jia Yi, Ji Kang now flushes out the details of their coexistence: rather than one standing in for the other, they wax and wane (*ying suo* 盈縮). Although this phrase was rarely used before Ji Kang's time, appearing in only a handful of texts written slightly before or during the Han dynasty, the following passage from the *Huainanzi* warrants out attention: "For these reasons, [those who embody] the ultimate Dao take no action. Now a dragon, then a snake, they expand and contract, coil and uncoil, and alter and transform with the seasons."[58] The imagery is important in that it speaks to Ji Kang's thesis that the interaction of wisdom and courage is neither predetermined nor inflexible but the result of a person's breath. The closer said breath is to the primal breath of the Dao, the more penetrating will be one's wisdom. Clarity of wisdom, therefore, can avoid falling victim to the fallacies put before it by the heart-mind which the world subsequently refers to as confusion. In the words of Confucius: "The Dao of the gentleman is threefold, and yet I have not been able to achieve any aspect of it: the good do not worry, the wise

are not confused, and the courageous do not fear."[59] In contrast, the *Zhuangzi* had this to say about wisdom and confusion:

> He who knows he is a fool is not the biggest fool; he who knows he is confused is not in the worst confusion. The man in the worst confusion will end his life without ever getting straightened out; the biggest fool will end his life without ever seeing the light.[60]

Jia Yi's wisdom is not like that just described by Zhuangzi; on the contrary, it is self-sufficient and interconnected with his courage. That he was occasionally blinded by the darkness of ignorance does not detract from his wisdom's overall integrity in that waxing and waning—that is, moving from states of clarity to befuddlement—are perfectly natural and mirror the vicissitudes of Yin and Yang. Being able to see one does not preclude the presence of the other, just as one in motion does not negate the stillness of the other. Visible and invisible, action and rest, how are these not applicable to wisdom and courage? Wisdom turns into ignorance and courage becomes cowardice; these are part of the inevitable transformation of human nature and Jia Yi is no exception.

You mentioned Huo Guang was deeply brave and yet he battled [with himself] when it came to abrogating the king, hence even bravery has something to which it yields. What is more, you spoke of the person of courage and how it was possible to wax and wane. This is certainly true. When Mr. Jia was in darkness about the owl, it shows that even wisdom has something that can block it. When Guang feared abrogating the king, it was because his bravery had that to which it must yield. Only ultimate wisdom can avoid confusion and ultimate courage avoid deficiency. Such being the case, who is without impairment? However, we should just outline the general points of who has them or not, and draw our conclusions from this.

At this point in his response, Ji Kang reiterates and refutes the points previously stated by Lü An. It is here that we are also told of "ultimate wisdom" and "ultimate courage," attributes that both Jia Yi and Huo Guang insufficiently cultivated. The reason, despite their highly respected talents, was because they could not transcend what, in the *Zhuangzi*, is known as "the limit of things" (*wu ji* 物際). The *Zhuangzi* tells us what Ji Kang omits:

> The men of this world … know the things they happen to encounter but not those that they have never encountered. They know how to do the things they can do, but they can't do the things they don't know how to do.[61]

Jia Yi's encounter with the owl and Huo Guang's deliberations regarding the king are examples of this limit, however, this is not an insurmountable

limit, for if it were, Ji Kang would not refer to the ultimate wisdom and courage of the sage. To quote the *Zhuangzi* once more:

> Your life has a limit, but knowledge has none. If you use what is limited to pursue what has no limit, you will be in danger. If you understand this and still strive for knowledge, you will be in danger for certain![62]

As wisdom cannot process what it does not know, and courage cannot act upon what it does not see, Ji Kang's defense thus far is without fault, though its presentation is rather unremarkable.

What is actually seen in things is primary. When Yannian was roused to action and his bravery and rightness soared to the clouds, this is courage. When you commented on him having no previous reputation for valor and strength, this is simply trusting his reputation but doubting the actuality of his affairs. When Yannian discussed his plans, he saw things using his wisdom. When his heroic air rose up, it was due to his unwavering bravery. This is easy enough to see. You also said when wisdom is lacking, courage can stand on its own. According to what you said, this person only has courage yet it is one endowed with special breath.

As with the previous section of his response, Ji Kang reiterates Lü An's arguments. When it comes to his defense of the persons under discussion, however, his remarks are disappointingly short on detail. For Ji Kang, we should look at Yannian's accomplishments and not the hearsay surrounding his life. Given there was nothing outwardly remarkable about Yannian, Ji Kang credits the exceptionalism of his courage to a special endowment of breath. What this endowed breath includes, Ji Kang will say in the next and final part of his answer.

The five elements exist in the body, each giving birth [to things]. Wisdom uses Yang to shine forth and courage uses Yin to condense. How can you say there is Yang but not Yin and that there is Yin but not Yang? Although they depend on one another to join their power, they are necessarily different breaths. All of your remaining claims, such as Yuqi, Ling's mother, the fierce tiger, and so on, these myriad words of yours point to the same thing. What were you hoping to show? Hopefully you will think about it carefully, and not take my words as superficial.

With the above, we reach the end of Ji Kang's response and this essay too. Thankfully, Ji Kang does not leave readers groping for information and introduces the role of the five elements within his *qi*-cosmology. From primal breath arises Yin and Yang and they, in turn, produce the five elements. *Qi*, Yin and Yang, and the five elements subsequently come together to create the myriad beings of the world. What determines the form and capabilities of these bodies is the amount of breath bestowed on them. Some have a large quantity while others very little; some have

a refined variant (*jingqi* 精氣) while others do not. When wisdom is active, it manifests itself as the dazzling light of Yang; when it recedes into the darkness of confusion, it becomes Yin. Conversely, courage begins as condensed Yin but as it grows in vigor, it is dispersed under the guise of Yang. In this way, what starts as Yin turns into Yang, and vice-versa, doing so until the breath fueling them is extinguished. Though said breath differs in nature, they come from the same source; though the timing and manner of their manifestations vary, their alternations are inseparable.

Ji Kang is not stating anything that Lü An would not already know as an admirer of Daoism. To offer his views on Fan Yuqi, Wang Ling's mother, and robber Zhi would be to simply repeat what was just said, thus, he does not bother. Indeed, his use of the expression "myriad words point to the same thing" (*wanyan zhiyi* 萬言致一) seems to be inspired by this passage from the *Yijing*:

> What does the world have to think and deliberate about? As all in the world ultimately comes to the same end, though the roads to it are different, so there is an ultimate congruence in thought, though there might be hundreds of ways to deliberate about it. So what does the world have to think and deliberate about?[63]

What Lü An's words point to is primal breath, which in turn alights the way of the Dao. All words and ideas can be traced to the Dao yet words and ideas never reach it. As the very first line of the *Daodejing* states, the Dao that is spoken of is not the constant Dao. The *Zhuangzi* holds the opinion that "when men hold on to their wisdom, the world will no longer be confused."[64]

Compared to his other essays, this one is philosophically unremarkable. It is hard to judge Ji Kang's contribution to the discussion on "talent and nature" when the texts of this debate have not survived. Perhaps it is because Daoism rarely speaks of courage, and employs wisdom in a markedly different manner than Confucianism, that Ji Kang struggles to formulate any semblance of a sophisticated argument. He certainly fails to deliver the fatal punch seen in his essays on music, life-nourishment, and dispelling self-interest. Be that as it may, it is notable that Ji Kang felt the need to voice his opinion on the issues concerning wisdom and courage and did so in a manner that was faithful to his own worldview.

On the Natural Joy of Learning 自然好學論

by Zhang Miao[65]

Section 1

Joy, anger, sorrow, happiness, love, hate, desire, and dread, these are feelings every person has. In fulfilling a wish there is joy, in seeing an

offense there is anger, in conflict and separation there is sorrow, in agreement and harmony there is happiness, in birth and fostering there is love, in defiance of the good there is disgust, in hunger there is a desire for food, and when forced to do something there is dread. These eight belong to us without any need to teach them, for they express what we want to say,[66] *and do so naturally.*

Zhang Miao 張邈 opens his essay with a list of human feelings (*xi* 喜, *nu* 怒, *ai* 哀, *le* 樂, *ai* 愛, *e* 惡, *yu*, 欲, *ju* 懼) and the events giving rise to them. In light of the fact that these feelings are common to everyone, there is no need to teach people how to express them as they are said to be natural. This emotive collectivity is part of the human condition, however, as he will say in Section 2 of his essay, if people gather in social groups but are not taught anything in the process, they will indulge their impulses and clashes will erupt as the eight feelings encounter one another. This clashing comes into being because people are not provided with an outlet to release their negative feelings, nor are they given an opportunity to improve upon those that are positive. Zhang Miao, in Section 3, will compare said knowing and ignorance to the light of a candle and its surrounding darkness, an image we also saw in Ji Kang's essay *On Courage and Wisdom*.

Returning to the feelings noted by Zhang Miao, Ji Kang also has a list of eight in his essay *Music has in it Neither Grief nor Joy*, but instead of including hate (*e* 惡) and desire (*yu* 欲), he has detestation (*zeng* 憎) and shame (*can* 慙). In his rebuttal to Zhang Miao, Ji Kang curiously does not mention these eight feelings but alludes to them by way of a tirade against the Confucian Classics. Two ancient texts of note that address the nature of human feelings are the *Zhuangzi*—"Loathing and desire, joy and anger, grief and happiness, these six are the entanglements of virtue"[67]—and the *Liji*, which says: "Joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, disliking, and liking. These seven feelings belong to men without their learning them."[68]

Observing Zhang Miao's initial use of "natural" (*ziran* 自然), we will need to be mindful of its difference not only with Ji Kang's own implementation, but with Daoism broadly speaking. As true as it might be that humans are born with the capability to feel and express emotions, Zhang Miao's argument that they are motivated by a deeper need to enhance or alleviate them does not make them natural in the eyes of Daoism. Why? Because the motivating actor is neither Nature nor the Dao but humanity herself. Thus, although one's response to stimuli might seem natural, its activity does not conform to the doctrine of non-deliberate action that qualifies whether something is natural or not.

Section 2

Before turning rancid, people would drink the blood and eat the hair [of animals] to fill themselves; this was the start of food. When they applied

heat and added orchids and tangerine, although people were tasting it for the first time, they enjoyed it as it matched their palate. With dried straw for drumsticks and drums made of clay, people slapped their bellies and sang while stamping their feet in dance, making their joy even more pleasurable. This is the essence of music. When wind and stringed instruments were added, along with feathers and fur, although hearing it for the first time, this clearly made people happy as it conformed to their heart-mind.

Outlining the origins of food, music, and dance, Zhang Miao describes how the feelings related to taste and emotional delight were enhanced through people's curiosity and willingness to learn from others. This was a time before Confucius and his followers canonized the teachings of the Zhou kings, a time when people were emotionally simple and morally unsullied. As long as what they did agreed with their innate feelings, they were content. The people Zhang Miao describes might seem primitive, but their humanity is no different from those of his own time. One question we cannot avoid asking is how Zhang Miao chose these examples? Was he quoting historical texts or simply being creative? In order to arrive at an answer, we need to dissect what he says, beginning with the first sentence.

Zhang Miao speaks of the rancid or fetish odor (*xingsao* 腥臊) given off by rotting flesh.[69] Several ancient texts refer to said smell, with only one belonging to Daoism: "When the disease sets in, then a fishy and fetid odor is smelled first and clear fluid leaves [the body]."[70] Other instances of *xingsao* can be found in the *Xunzi*—"the nose distinguishes between fragrant and foul-smelling"[71]—and the *Hanfeizi*, which writes:

> [In antiquity] the people ate fruits and melons, mussels and clams, which had a rancid smell and damaged their stomachs. As a result, many people became sick. A sage appeared and making a flint to produce fire, transformed the rancid smell. Thereafter the people took him as the king of the world.[72]

Not only did the people of high antiquity eat raw meat, they also consumed the blood and fur of animals. This practice was recorded in the *Liji*:

> Formerly the ancient kings had no houses. In winter they lived in caves which they had excavated, and in summer in nests which they had framed. They knew not yet the transforming power of fire, but ate the fruits of plants and trees, and the flesh of birds and beasts, drinking their blood, and swallowing (also) the hair and feathers.[73]

When it comes to flavoring food with orchids and tangerine (*lan ju* 蘭橘), the *Liezi* 列子 warns us they can corrupt our standard of taste:

> [A peasant] thinks that nothing tastes better than a dinner of beans. His skin and flesh are thick and coarse, his joints and muscles supple and vigorous. If one morning you were to put him on soft

> furs behind silken curtains, and offer him good millet and meat and fragrant oranges, it would unsettle his mind and injure his health, and he would fall ill with fever.[74]

The above accounts all provide Zhang Miao with intellectual fodder to ground his stance on humanity's willingness to improve the quality of our diet so as to live a healthier life. Such willingness, he says, arises out of the pleasant feeling derived from this improvement as opposed to any physical benefit we might have. The joyfulness of food and musical accompaniment at a banquet, for example, is the product of their harmonization with the eight feelings, leading to a "matching of the palette" (*shi yu kou* 適於口) and "conforming to the heart-mind" (*dang qi xin* 當其心). This psychologizing of human existence did not commence with Zhang Miao, however, but with the ancient texts just examined.

Take the beating of a drum or a person's stomach whilst eating food for instance. The *Liji* tells us:

> At the first use of ceremonies, they began with meat and drink. They roasted millet and pieces of pork; they excavated the ground in the form of a jar, and scooped the water from it with their two hands; they fashioned a handle of clay, and struck with it an earthen drum. (Simple as these arrangements were), they yet seemed to be able to express by them their reverence for spiritual beings.[75]

The *Liji* was not the only ancient text that contained the image of people slapping their bellies in revelatory joy, it is present in the *Zhuangzi* too:

> In the days of He Xu, people stayed home but didn't know what they were doing, walked around but didn't know where they were going. Their mouths crammed with food, they were merry; drumming on their bellies, they passed the time. This was as much as they were able to do.[76]

Whatever feelings we might associate with food and revelry, they are no match for those seeking power or looking to do good in the world, a point Zhang Miao makes below.

People are born straight but if they gather together without being taught anything, they will indulge their heart-mind, their intentions will clash, and the eight feelings will issue forth. In joy, people want to give things to others; in anger, they want to punish others. Without the claws and teeth needed to exert their power, and without rank and reward to name their favors, they cannot respectfully receive those who are loved, or send away those who are hated. Should someone say: Hemp and bamboo, wild grass and rush, these can convey sorrow; canals and moats, precipitous terrain, these can slacken fear; strung wood and sharpened metal, these can ease indignation; abundant wealth and plentiful goods, these can be

given away. Amongst those having lungs and intestines, who would not be delighted at having a gratified look and a heart-mind at ease? What other need is there to eat gentian or be fond of pickled calamus?

In this penultimate section of his essay, Zhang Miao commences his discussion by alluding to the straightness of human nature first raised by Confucius in the *Lunyu*: "A person survives by being upright. If you try leading a crooked life, only blind luck will allow you to get by."[77] To be straight is to practice honesty and fairness while avoiding judgments or actions that would corrupt one's moral standing or the norms of society. Zhang Miao is not attempting to lure Ji Kang into an ethical debate; on the contrary, his purpose is to reinforce the idea that the eight feelings require oversight, not the right and wrong behind said feelings. Such being the case, when people come together and form a community, unless they are instructed how to live alongside others, their natural indulgences will overpower them and create tension and conflict with others such that the eight feelings are exercised without abandon.

Taking the physical prowess of wild animals, specifically their sharp claws and teeth, as an example of the natural exertion of power, Zhang Miao says we will be unable to banish those who feed our sense of hatred unless we possess it too. We can compare this position to that of the *Huainanzi*: "People do not have strong muscles and bones or sharp claws and teeth, thus they cut leather to make armor; they forge iron to make blades."[78] Whereas Zhang Miao sees claws and teeth as a means to cast away those who are unwelcome, the *Huainanzi* passage recognizes that humanity naturally lacks these attributes and so we must protect ourselves from them. In both cases, teeth and claws perfectly serve their animal host and easily switch from an offensive to a defensive application. When it comes to feelings, teeth and claws can be used to convey any one of them, and do so without being taught beforehand. Perhaps Zhang Miao had this in mind when he chose to incorporate this example into his argument?

Strung wood and sharpened metal (*xianmu yanjin* 弦木剡金), which refers to a bow and metal arrowheads, is based upon a near-identical description in the *Yijing*: "They [Huangdi, Yao, and Shun] strung pieces of wood to make bows and whittled others to make arrows. The benefit of bows and arrows was such that they dominated the world."[79] As with the remaining examples in this part of Zhang Miao's statement, what the bow and arrow does is serve as a catharsis for pent-up feelings. Rather than see the eight feelings clash with one another due to a conflict over divergent intentions, people's natural curiosity teaches them to moderate the level at which these feelings are allowed to persist before they become problematic. If done properly, everyone will subsequently enjoy a heart-mind that is at ease (*xinshi* 心釋) and a body that does not require medicinal supplements such as gentian (*danfei* 膽蜚)[80] and pickled calamus (*zu changpu* 菹菖蒲) to alleviate the symptoms caused by imbalanced emotions.

Section 3

Furthermore, we sit in the day and sleep at night; we do things when it is light and rest when it is dark. This is the constancy of heavenly Dao and is what people follow and practice. If a person is in a dark room and observes the light of a torch, although not being taught to do so, they will be ecstatic to see it, even after being told there is a shining sun comparable in size to the red-lacquered doors of their house that will return again at daybreak. Not even revealing this will diminish their joy. Furthermore, after the long darkness of night they will be illuminated by the great Yang and their feeling of despondence will change, dispelling their ignorance. Thus, when a matter appears to be at an end, if one responds with feelings to return to its root, even if the six arts with their multiple splendors and various sly pursuits of fame and profit are calculated and then studied, our natural delight [in learning] will be undiminished.

Zhang Miao commences the conclusion of his essay by making a cosmological claim: the routine of human life takes after the heavenly bodies, including the Dao. We wake and sleep, work and rest, in a regular and repetitive cycle that mirrors the rising and setting of the sun. Light and dark, movement and stillness, accumulation and decline, all of these are metaphors for the interconnectivity of Yin and Yang. Daoism has much to say about the constant (*chang* 常) Dao and how the myriad beings of the world naturally follow it. Zhang Miao's claim is thus spot on. The image of a torch (*zhengzhu* 烝燭), which would have been made of hemp straw or dry bamboo, and a dark room symbolizes several things. To begin, one of the earliest textual references to torchlight is this passage from the *Liji*: "Or he would be like one searching all night in a dark room without a light; how could he see anything?"[81]

Sitting in a dark room, we are released of our sight and overcome by feelings of vulnerability and trepidation. The discomfort of the unknown does little to assuage our pressing thoughts and, as Zhang Miao would have us believe, we are afraid of the dark from birth. Daoism argues the opposite, that things are their most genuine when they are dark and quiet. What is more, if we are to follow the praxis of the sage, we must learn to dwell in the turbidity of the world for it is there that the Dao's mystery is left untouched. The dark room is hence not for Zhang Miao; he is drawn to the torch's flame, an attraction that fills him with joy. We find an early example of this delight in the *Huainanzi*:

> If from total darkness they were to see bright light so that they were extremely happy, how much more so if they were to leave the room and take a seat in the hall where they could see the light of the sun and moon.[82]

When it comes to elucidating the connection between dark and light, the *Zhuangzi* contains two pertinent passages: “Look into that closed room, the empty chamber where brightness is born”[83] and, “Death and life have their fates, and their constancy like night and dawn is due to heaven.”[84]

Besides the literal meaning of a torch in a dark room, Zhang Miao implies they also represent intellectual enlightenment. Having initially discovered the power of light to cast away the blackness of night, the observer of the torchlight simultaneously acquires a deeper understanding of their own nature which, once acquired, stays with them. This is why their delight does not fade after being told of the shining sun outside their door. This sun, the great Yang (*taiyang* 太陽), illuminates all by displacing the darkness of night, the great Yin (*taiyin* 太陰).[85] Despondency thus gives way to joy and ignorance gives way to wisdom. For Zhang Miao, the future is full of uncertainty and challenges, and yet human feelings will always be present for they are the root (*ben* 本) of our responses (*ying* 應).

Being the root, as opposed to a manifestation of human behavior, the eight feelings belonging to humans are naturally occurring and pleasing. To study the six arts (*liu yi* 六藝), and to a lesser degree the procurement of fame and wealth, is to be naturally delighted by the wealth of knowledge they contain. However, Ji Kang fiercely criticizes the arts of Confucianism, specifically its canonical texts, for only teaching people the benefits of success and not what is essential to life. Zhang Miao’s joy of learning is hence contingent upon benefit whereas for Ji Kang, the art of attaining the natural is not found in the arts of Confucianism. The reason is that the root of human nature, and the techniques to perfect it, emanate from the primal breath of the Dao. Unlike Confucianism, which corrupts the natural order of things, the Daoist art of non-deliberate action preserves the equanimity of things, allowing them to coexist harmoniously and without external interference. In contrast, Zhang Miao’s thesis is that the five Classics are the beacon of hope and intellectual elucidation in an otherwise dark and ignorant world.

Rebuttal to On the Natural Joy of Learning 難自然好學論

by Ji Kang

Section 1

As for the nature of the common people, they take peace as good and danger as bad, and ease as good and labor as bad. Thus, if undisturbed their ambitions can be realized, and if uncoerced their will can be followed. In the time of high antiquity, before the great simplicity had been damaged, the rulers above were without culture and the people below were without competition, things were complete and followed their guiding norms, and everyone was content. Full they slept peacefully, hungry they

sought food, happy they slapped their bellies, unaware that this was a time of ultimate virtue. Being so, from where could they know the sprouts of benevolence and righteousness, or the patterns of ritual and regulation?

Just as Zhang Miao began his essay with an outline of human nature and the eight feelings that help shape it, Ji Kang commences his rebuttal with an account of the naturalistic ways of the common people in high antiquity. This was a time unblemished by the ideas of benevolence, righteousness, ritual, and regulation; once said ideas had come into being, however, people's ambitions could no longer be realized and their will was forced to conform to these newly introduced norms. Ji Kang is conveying a vision of antiquity typically associated with Daoism, as this passage from the *Daodejing* illustrates: "Those in antiquity who were good at practicing the Dao did not use it to make the common folk intelligent but used it to make them stupid."[86] Additionally, the *Zhuangzi* says:

> The men of old dwelled in the midst of crudity and chaos; side by side with the rest of the world, they attained simplicity and silence there. At that time the Yin and Yang were harmonious and still; ghosts and spirits worked no mischief; the four seasons kept to their proper order; the ten thousand things knew no injury; and living creatures were free from premature death.[87]

Looking beyond the Daoist corpus, the *Guanzi* also notices the need to leave the common people to their naturalistic tendencies: "The enlightened ruler, in governing the realm, calms his people and does not trouble them."[88]

Prior to the appearance of the Confucian gentleman, the Dao was ensconced in the world as great simplicity (*dapu* 大樸). *Dapu* appears to be Ji Kang's own invention as it is not found in any text predating the Han dynasty.[89] Though the term *pu* is not unique to Daoism, Daoism was the first tradition to ascribe it to the sage, and by way of extension, the Dao. Undoubtedly, the most well-known instance of simplicity is from the *Daodejing*: "Exemplify simplicity, embrace the uncarved block, curtail self-interest, and have few desires."[90] However, Ji Kang's need to disprove Zhang Miao's claim that the eight feelings are what guided ancient people's behavior requires a more sophisticated argument than what Laozi's terse account can provide. Utilizing the same key terms (*su* 素, *pu* 樸, *yu* 欲) as Laozi, the *Zhuangzi* paints a more detailed picture of what Ji Kang labels a time of great simplicity: "In this age of perfect virtue, men live the same as birds and beasts, group themselves side by side with the ten thousand things … in uncarved simplicity, the people attain their true nature."[91]

With these passages, it is easy to understand why Ji Kang argues that in high antiquity, rulers had no need for culture and as a result, the common people did not compete with one another. When people stop treasuring what lies outside themselves, they return to a state of harmony

with the world, becoming complete as a result. In being complete, they simply follow what is innate to them and in this way remain constantly content. To live in accordance with what is already within us (i.e., the Dao) is hence the key to a long life, a point Ji Kang discusses in his essay *On Nourishing Life*; in the present context, however, naturalness points to the governance of the sage that the *Zhuangzi* describes thusly: "Let your [heart-] mind wander in simplicity, blend your spirit with the vastness, follow along with things the way they are, and make no room for personal views—then the world will be governed."[92] Driven by the simplest of needs and spontaneously expressing their feelings, the people of this time had within them a virtue yet to be corrupted by benevolence and righteousness, ritual and regulation, hence it was called a time of ultimate virtue (*zhide* 至德).

The ultimate virtue that Ji Kang has in mind is not what is seen in the *Lunyu*—"the virtue of the Zhou, surely it can be said to represent ultimate virtue"[93]—but something closer to what the *Zhuangzi* writes: "Have you alone never heard of that age of perfect … the people knotted cords and used them. They relished their food, admired their clothing, enjoyed their customs, and were content with their houses."[94] Is it any wonder, then, that Daoism and later supporters of it like Ji Kang, would so strongly object to the introduction of ritualized conduct (*li* 禮) and a set of regulatory laws (*lü* 律) to oversee its implementation? Daoists were not the only ones opposed to using ritual propriety as a social modifier; in the *Guanzi* we read: "If the people are not compliant in mind and submissive in action, one cannot use phrases about propriety and duty to instruct and transform them. The prince must take this into consideration."[95] Ji Kang's inclusion of ultimate virtue not only testifies to the naturalism of the ancients, it sets the stage for a prolonged critique of the five Classics that will comprise the remainder of this part of his rebuttal.

When the ultimate person disappeared and the great Dao was in decline, it was then that rulers began producing writings to propagate their ideas. They divided the collectivity of things, ordering them by class and species, and constructed benevolence and righteousness to encircle the people's heart-mind. They established titles and duties to examine the external, and recommended people study and lecture upon their writings to venerate their teachings. Thus, the numerous and jumbled six Classics, and flourishing hundred schools of thought, cleared the way for glory and profit, and the people wildly chased them as if asleep. As a result, birds that covet life eat the millet and beans found in gardens and ponds; scholars that seek peace deceive their will by following the vulgar. Holding their brushes and clutching their writing tablets, they sit with an air of ease. They amass learning and expound the Classics instead of working on the farm. Consequently, it is only in difficult times that they take up learning because it can bring them

glory. They first calculate the benefits and then put it into practice; they first feel joy and then practice what is successful.

Recall that Zhang Miao only mentions the six arts (*liu yi* 六藝) at the very end of his essay; Ji Kang, however, brings them up midway through the opening section of his response. Amongst his collected writings, this essay is the only one where he speaks of the six Classics, so his criticism of them here is significant.[96] During the time of great simplicity, the world was free of ideological competition. Once people started to neglect the Dao, however, culture and materialism took over the world and the sage was forgotten. Learning thus transformed from a natural curiosity of things to disseminating the ideas and writings of rulers. Thereafter, the natural oneness of things was destroyed as they were divided into artificial cliques, while the rulers shackled the common people's heart-mind with benevolence and righteousness.

The phrase "encircle the heart-mind" (*yingxin* 嬰心) is a rare one indeed. Besides Ji Kang, the only other occurrence in ancient or early medieval texts is found in the *Hanfeizi*: "To use the techniques of Zhanzi to encircle the heart-mind of the populace is to be as insecure as a flower."[97] Having hampered the inborn nature of people, a system of titles and duties was devised to maintain their orderly conduct. Amongst the canonical works of antiquity, titles and duties (*mingfen* 名分) were said to be the purview of the *Lüshi Chunqiu*.[98] Having made these texts the basis for learning, it fell to scholars to promulgate and exalt them, however, doing so meant they had to pollute their virtue and go against their wills. For the *Zhuangzi*, people who pursue what is vulgar have their priorities backwards and are hence known as "blind and benighted" (*bimeng* 蔽蒙).[99]

The result of this unfolding of attitudes is that the natural joy of learning is no longer to be found working on the fields, but is pursued by a few cloistered, erudite individuals. Learning thus becomes a means to an end, an end that necessarily gives rise to success. The glory of success is a road paved through the need to overcome difficulty; it is not based upon our natural inclination to harmonize with the Dao. Learning only after difficulty arises (*kun er houxue* 困而後學) is explained by Confucius as follows:

> Those who are born understanding it [the Dao] are the best; those who come to understand it through learning are second. Those who find it difficult to understand and yet persist in their studies come next. People who find it difficult to understand but do not even try to learn are the worst of all.[100]

Ji Kang is here criticizing the third-tier persons spoken of by Confucius, but in the next portion of his remarks, he will praise those belonging to the first tier. What one learns should not be acted upon solely because it turns into glory, which makes us joyful; rather, the individual Ji Kang

has in mind remains neutral in their course of action as it pertains to learning—they have the knowledge but do not act upon it. Indeed, for Ji Kang, learning is all about nourishing life, yet what is necessary for life cannot be found in books. Thus, our model for learning is not the Classics but the arts of the ultimate person.

Being analogous to naturalism, you thus refer to it as natural. If we push on to its source, the six Classics take restraint and guidance as their key whereas human nature is happy to follow its desires. Restraint and guidance thus violate our wishes but following our desires allows us to obtain what is natural. And so, obtaining the natural does not come from the restraint and guidance of the six Classics. Furthermore, the root of completing our inborn nature has no need to commit to the rituals and regulations that violate our feelings. Thus, benevolence and righteousness arise from false guiding norms and are not the manner to cultivate the genuine, while integrity and conceding are born out of contention and do not emerge from the natural. From this we can say: birds do not become docile to escape harm and animals do not congregate in order to be domesticated. Thus, the genuine nature of human beings is to act without deliberatio, and when we are being properly natural, we can avoid indulging in ritual and learning. Your essay also said: Having fine-tasting food and delicacies, although people were tasting them for the first time, they enjoyed them as they matched their palate. What is more, to be in a dark room and observe the light of a torch, although not taught to do so, a person's heart-mind will feel pleased. How much more so will they be when, after the long darkness of night, they are illuminated by the great Yang and their feeling of despondence changes, dispelling their ignorance! When a matter appears to be at an end, if one responds with feelings to return to the root, our natural delight [in learning] will be undiminished.

The above is Ji Kang recapitulating the third section of Zhang Miao's essay. To acquire what is natural, in being natural, it cannot emerge from what is human. Since the driving force behind the Classics is one of restraint and guidance, the notions of benevolence and righteousness found in said texts are a false guiding norm and not the means by which the genuine should be cultivated. In the words of the *Zhuangzi*, "the truth is that which is received from heaven. By nature, it is the way it is and cannot be changed."[101] Ji Kang will have a great deal to say about cultivating the genuine (*yangzhen* 養真) in his essay *On Nourishing Life*. For the purposes of the present essay, however, it will suffice to say that the genuine is non-deliberate action which, when perfected, results in being properly natural. Following what is natural, therefore, guides people on how to avoid indulging in ritual and learning. However, this goes against the final remark made by Zhang Miao, that whenever a situation seems to be at an end, so long as we respond to it with our feelings, we can return to our root without diminishing the natural delight

we experience in learning.[102] The reason why Ji Kang opposes Zhang Miao's argument is contained in the next section of his refutation.

Section 2

My refutation is this: The mouth reacts to sweet and bitter and the body to pain and itching; the former moves in response to things, the latter reacts in response to affairs. It is not necessary to learn either before being able to do them, for they do not depend on what is yet to exist. This is a necessary guiding norm and nothing can change it. Now you are using a guiding norm that is necessary as an analogy for the unnecessary issue of delight of learning which, I am afraid, is a view that appears right but is actually wrong. Learning resembles the debate over rice and millet; it is simply a matter of being in the right place.

From the above, it is clear that Ji Kang is putting forth a version of the Nature versus nurture argument. Unlike Zhang Miao, who holds to the nurture view, Ji Kang's worldview is firmly rooted in Nature. Thus, the mouth's reaction to different flavors does not occur because one reads about them in the Confucian Classics; rather, it is a spontaneous response to food. Similarly, the body's reaction to physical stimuli does not occur because one was trained in social etiquette; rather, it is a spontaneous response to the situation at hand. This is what Ji Kang means by the expression "do not depend on what is yet to exist" (*budai jie er hou you* 不待借而後有). The notion that humans are artificially motivated to respond to the external world is one that stretches back to antiquity in China, as this passage from the *Liji* demonstrates: "It belongs to the nature of man, as from heaven, to be still at his birth. His activity shows itself as he is acted on by external things, and develops the desires incident to his nature."[103]

Humanity is not only quiet at birth but instinctively aware of the guiding norms, or natural order, of the world, thereby granting us a measure of adaptability that would otherwise be unavailable if we were to base our responses upon what is contained in the Classics. The *Liezi* refers to these Nature-guided individuals as the wise (*zhi* 智): "The capacity to pick times and snatch opportunities, and be never at a loss how to answer events, belongs to the wise."[104] Said individuals possess a clear understanding of what Ji Kang terms the "necessary guiding norm" (*biran zhi li* 必然之理), which, according to the *Zhuangzi*, is none other than the Dao (*dao, li ye* 道, 理也).[105] Thus, to use what is necessary to grasp what is unnecessary is bound to fail. Here, Ji Kang is borrowing the *Zhuangzi*'s logic of right and wrong (*shifei* 是非) to make his case, an example of which reads: "To use a horse to show that a horse is not a horse is not as good as using a non-horse to show that a horse is not a horse."[106]

In the end, Ji Kang says, learning is merely a matter of circumstance; whether we are dealing with rice (*mi* 米) or millet (*su* 粟), the potential

for both to change into something else is the same. What we experience, however, depends on the time at which we encounter the rice or millet during its life cycle: as a seed, shoot, mature plant, or withered husk. To put this into the context of learning, we read in the *Lunheng* that "a man without learning is like rice not yet turned into paddy, or hulled rice not yet cooked."[107] Ji Kang refutes the six Classics as a suitable model for learning on the grounds that they are incompatible with the guiding norms of Nature and, furthermore, they prevent us from seeing beyond the limit of things (i.e., their potential). The joy one derives from studying the Classics is hence misleading and ultimately harmful to one's life.

Section 3

Now you establish the six Classics as your standard, make your admiration for benevolence and righteousness your priority, use established standards as a royal carriage, and lecturing and teaching as your wet nurse. You believe following this road will give you an unimpeded understanding [of things], while deviating from it will lead to impediment. When the heart-mind wanders one can see the limit [of things] but not what lies beyond them. Galloping to the end of your years, your thoughts never leave their post. Gathering your clan in order to offer your opinions, only learning is treasured. Clutching a book and selecting a sentence, you lift your head and sigh in admiration, all the while keeping said words in your breast. This is what you consider to be honorable and illustrious.

Ji Kang begins the final section of his rebuttal by continuing to castigate Zhang Miao's faith in the six Classics. Employing images from the world of the ruling class and social elite, Ji Kang superimposes them onto Zhang Miao's argument with striking effect. The six Classics become the measuring line, benevolence and righteousness are its overlords, standards reveal their vanity in the form of a gilded carriage, while nourishing the heart-mind of others through lectures and speeches is akin to a wet nurse. To pursue this path of learning, Ji Kang says, is to believe one's understanding of things will be correct (i.e., unobstructed), whereas departing from it will result in an understanding that is incorrect (i.e., obstructed). Thus, while a person may observe the extreme of a thing or situation, they cannot see what lies beyond it. In keeping with Ji Kang's palace motif, we can say his critique of Zhang Miao paints him as a person who can see the outer walls of the palace but is unable to see what lies beyond them. Zhang Miao, therefore, has become imprisoned by the six Classics, unable to escape their confining doctrines for the boundless freedom of the natural world.

Zhang Miao cannot grant his heart-mind the wandering (*you* 游) expected of him by Ji Kang because he is compelled to abide by the

established standards (*gui ju* 規矩) set forth in the six Classics, as the *Liji* explains:

> In the right government of a state, the Rules of Propriety serve the same purpose as the steelyard in determining what is light and what is heavy; or as the carpenter's line in determining what is crooked and what is straight; or as the circle and square in determining what is square and what is round.[108]

What such conformity produces, therefore, is a lifelong pursuit of learning whose grounding thought remains in place (*si bu chu li* 思不出位). Why? The *Lunyu* explains: "The gentleman's thoughts do not go beyond his office."[109] And so, Zhang Miao is no different from those elders who bring together their family members (or fellow villagers) to offer their views, committing lines of text to memory, believing they are the extant of all there is to know. This, Ji Kang sarcastically remarks, is what Zhang Miao and his ilk take to be the coverage of what is honorable and illustrious. As we shall see in the next paragraph of his reply, Ji Kang's tone will become even more acerbic as he tries to shock Zhang Miao into realizing the limitations of his thinking.

Thus, you call the six Classics the great Yang and not learning the long night. Now suppose you understand the ceremonial court as the hut next to a tomb, and take chanting and incanting as the words of ghosts—if the six Classics are overgrown with weeds, and benevolence and righteousness are foul and rotting flesh, then looking at documents and records will make you dim-sighted, studying how to bow and retreat will make you stooped, wearing clothes that indicate your title will cramp your muscles, and talking about rites and canons will make your teeth rot. If such were the case, you will discard all of them and begin anew with the myriad things. Then, although you do not grow weary of finding joy in learning, there will still be something lacking. Thus, the previous lack of learning is not necessarily the long night, and the six Classics are not necessarily the great Yang.

In this part of Ji Kang's response, he takes issue with Zhang Miao calling the six Classics the great Yang (i.e., the sun) while ignorance is known as the long night (i.e., the great Yin). Not only does Ji Kang make the point that no matter what one learns, there will always be something lacking, he explicitly emphasizes how the pursuit of the non-natural extols a heavy cost on our physical being. Adding some satirical humor to the mix, Ji Kang denies the imperial court and its vaunted scholars their pride of place by inverting the majestic symbolism of the palace into one of death and sorrow. The structure next to a tomb (*bingshe* 丙捨)—one of the side rooms in a crypt—is where mourners perform their prayers and leave offerings to the deceased. It is, in other words, a place

for chanting and incanting (*song feng* 誦諷) and to listen to the words of ghosts (*guiyu* 鬼語). Ji Kang is not being subtle about the allusion here: the six Classics belong to realm of ghosts (their long-dead authors) and those, like Zhang Miao, who take joy in learning them are doing nothing but chanting and incanting for said ghosts. The Classics can do nothing for the living nor can they improve the harmony of the court in which they are being taught. This is the first point Ji Kang is making regarding the harmful influence the Classics have on our well-being.

The second point involves associating a series of disturbing images with the major elements of Confucian learning. To dissuade Zhang Miao, Ji Kang begins with the Classics themselves, directly stating them to be overgrown with weeds (*wuhui* 蕪穢). Ji Kang then moves to the moral norms driving the entire Confucian program—benevolence and righteousness—which he denigrates as foul and rotting flesh (*chou fu* 臭腐). Since learning the Classics entails reading them over a prolonged period, doing so will end up making us dim-sighted (*muqiao* 目瞧). Another aspect of our physical self that suffers in the pursuit of Confucian learning is a stooped posture (*yu* 傴) due to all the bowing and crouched retreating (*yi rang* 揖讓) in the presence of one's superiors. On this, the *Liji* says: "When bowings and courtesies marked the government of the kingdom, there would be what might be described as music and ceremony indeed."[110]

Even worse, Ji Kang says, are the cramped muscles (*zhuanjin* 轉筋) we will have to endure as we wear clothing that limits our natural movement. This truth was even recognized by texts outside the Confucian tradition, such as the *Hanfeizi*: "Shu Xiang sat next to duke Ping and sought instructions on handling [state] affairs. Though the duke's calves hurt, his feet were numb, and his muscles cramped, he did not dare sit slanted."[111] What is more, our teeth will rot (*chi qu* 齒齲) from all the discussions we will create when it comes to learning the rites and canons. Such being the case, who would not willingly abandon such pursuits and return to oneness with the myriad things? However, as Confucius himself wrote: "Remaining silent and yet comprehending, learning and yet never becoming tired, encouraging others and never growing weary—these are tasks that present me with no difficulty."[112] In contrast, Ji Kang holds the view that lack of learning is not equal to ignorance, and learning the six Classics is not equal to having an enlightened heart-mind.

There is a common saying: A beggar is not insulted by a horse doctor. If we could relive the uncultured governance of high antiquity, there would be no need for learning in order to have peace, and no need for toil in order to acquire one's will. What, then, would you seek in the six Classics or desire with benevolence and righteousness? In this way, of those learning today, how is it they learn after first calculating the benefits? If one acts only after calculating the benefits, this is not a natural response. Given all you have said, I am afraid you are in need of pickled calamus.

Ji Kang's final remarks begin with a reference to the horse doctor (*ma yi* 馬醫) story from the *Liezi*:

> There was a poor man in Qi who always begged in the city market … There is nothing in the world more disgraceful than to beg. If even begging did not disgrace me, how can I be disgraced by a horse-doctor?[113]

He then restates the need to return to the uncultured time of high antiquity first mentioned at the start of his refutation, and how doing so will alleviate the need to learn the Classics in order to attain peace, or toil to achieve one's will. The order of these points is not accidental. To live with contentment in poverty, like the beggar mentioned in the *Liezi* passage, is precisely to live in the uncultured time of high antiquity; it is an embracement of simplicity and quietude, a lifestyle utterly free of the necessities dictated by the Confucian canon. With little to no material possessions to weigh him down, the beggar wanders carefree, unaware of the stigma his so-called poverty brings him. The beggar is thus not an outlier of society; on the contrary, society is the outlier of the natural world of the Dao.

In terms of toiling to achieve one's will, an excellent explanation can be found in the *Zhuangzi*:

> When the men of ancient times spoke of the fulfillment of ambition, they did not mean fine carriages and caps. They meant simply that joy was so complete that it could not be made greater. Nowadays, however, when men speak of the fulfillment of ambition, they mean fine carriages and caps. But carriages and caps affect the body alone, not the inborn nature and fate.[114]

Guided by Zhuangzi's words, Ji Kang's questioning of the Classics as the bedrock of learning, and the desire of people to identify with benevolence and righteousness as the tools to achieve moral perfection, stands on solid ground.

Indeed, if humanity is naturally imbued with a curiosity to learn things, and said curiosity is not premised on the benefit or harm it might bring us, why do people insist on calculating the potential benefit their knowledge may bring before putting it into action? Do people not realize their response is unnatural and prone to manipulation? If Yin and Yang alternate without interference, and night and day replace one another in perfect harmony, why should the state of human understanding be any different? To unquestioningly follow the Classics, as Zhang Miao would have it, is to be blind to their incompleteness, and despite the efforts of those who devoted their lives to clarify the Confucian canon, there will always be something lacking and this, in turn, will push people to

devise further solutions to address the gaps. In other words, it becomes a self-defeating cycle akin to using a horse to show that a horse is not a horse and is why Ji Kang ends his essay with a plea to Zhang Miao to take some pickled calamus!

Notes

1. Robert Henricks (1983: 127) translates this term as "refined intelligence." *Jingyi* is not found in any pre-Qin philosophical texts except for the *Yijing* where it is used just once. In the Wei-Jin period, *jingyi* is used in just two texts: chapters 1 and 2 of the *Wenxin Diaolong* 文心雕龍, and chapters 3, 16, 22, and 25 of the *Baopuzi Waipian* 抱樸子外篇. See Yang Mingzhao.
2. *Yijing*, "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 562; Lynn 1994: 81–82.
3. *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 70; Watson, 11. Of the many examples of Zhuangzi's critique of Hui Shi and the other sophists, the following from chapter 10 "*quqie* 胠篋" best expresses his feelings: "The flood of rhetoric that enables men to invent wily schemes and poisonous slanders, the glib gabble of 'hard' and 'white,' the foul fustian of 'same' and 'different,' bewilder the understanding of common men." See Guo Qingfan, 359; Watson, 72.
4. *Lunheng*, chapter 7. See Huang Hui, 59; Forke, volume 1: 325.
5. *Heguanzi*, chapter 11. See Huang Huaixin, 244; translation is my own.
6. *Zhuangzi*, chapter 18. See Guo Qingfan, 615; Watson, 141.
7. *Lunheng*, chapter 8. See Huang Hui, 81; Forke, volume 1: 381.
8. *Lunyu*, book 13. See Cheng Shude, 893; Slingerland, 139. Slingerland translates the expression "*gai que ru ye*" as "the gentleman should remain silent," noting that: "Literally, the gentleman should 'leave a blank space' (*que* 闕)." A more accurate translation of *que* is: "deficit, deficiency" (*kuisun* 虧損) or "lacking, shortfall" (*duan shao* 短少). Astute readers will notice that the character *gai* 盖 (or 蓋) is written differently in Ji Kang's essay and the *Lunyu* passage but the meaning is identical.
9. *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 83; Watson, 14.
10. *Zhuangzi*, chapter 22. See Guo Qingfan, 752; Watson, 183.
11. *Lunyu*, book 19. See Cheng Shude, 1319; Slingerland, 225.
12. Duke Ling of Zheng 鄭靈公 (r. ?–605 BCE) was killed by two of his relatives, Zigong 子公 and Zijia 子家, for not allowing the latter to eat a dish of turtle meat. The story appears in the *Zuozhuan* entry for duke Xuan of Lu 魯宣公 (r. 608–591 BCE): "The leaders of Chu presented a large turtle to duke Ling of Zheng. Gongzi Song and Gongzi Guishenga were about to have an audience with the lord. Gongzi Songa's index finger moved involuntarily. He showed it to Gongzi Guishenga and said: 'On other days when my finger did this, I always without fail got to taste something extraordinary.' As they entered, the cook was about to take the turtle apart. They looked at each other and smiled. The lord asked why, and Gongzi Guishenga told him. When the lord had the high officers partake of the turtle, he called Gongzi Songa forward but did not give him any. Furious, Gongzi Songa dipped his finger into the cauldron, tasted the turtle, and left. The lord was so enraged that he wanted to kill Gongzi Songa. Gongzi Songa plotted with Gongzi Guishenga to act first. Gongzi Guishenga said: 'Even with an aging domestic animal, one is reluctant to kill it. How much more so then with the ruler?' Gongzi Song turned things around and slandered Gongzi Guishenga. Gongzi Guishenga became fearful and complied with him. In the summer, they assassinated Lord Ling." See Durrant et al., 607–608.

13 Regarding Hua Chen 華臣, the *Zuozhuan* states that during the reign of duke Xiang of Lu 魯襄公 reign (r. 572–542 BCE): "Hua Yue of Song died. His younger brother Hua Chen, deeming the house of his nephew Hua Gaobi vulnerable, sent brigands to murder Hua Gaobi's steward Hua Wu. These six brigands used daggers to kill him at the Lu Gate, behind the abode of Xiang Xu, the minister of the left whose settlement was He. Xiang Xu was fearful and said, 'I am not guilty.' The brigands said, 'Hua Gaobi is chastising Hua Wu because of private grudges.' Hua Chen thereupon imprisoned Hua Wu's wife and said, 'Give me your great jade disk.' The duke of Song heard about these events and said, 'Not only did Hua Chen use violence against none other than his own ancestral line, but he has also wrought great havoc on the government of the domain of Song. We must drive him out.' Xiang Xu said, 'Hua Chen, too, is a minister. Insubordination among the great ministers is a disgrace to the domain. It is better to cover this up.' The Song ruler thus dropped the case." See Durrant et al., 1044–1047.

14 This line is from the story of cook Ding in the *Zhuangzi*, chapter 3. See Guo Qingfan, 119; Watson, 19–20. For more on the art of cook Ding's butchery, see Chai 2019a: 53–56.

15 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 25. See Guo Qingfan, 224–225; Watson, 224–225.

16 *Huainanzi*, chapter 2. See He Ning, 149; Major et al., 102.

17 *Lunyu*, book 15. See Cheng Shude, 1120; Slingerland, 187.

18 See Pi Yuanzhen 2000: 204–215; Han Guoliang; and Wu Guanhong 2003: 265–269.

19 *Renwuzhi*, chapter 1. See Liang Mancang, 10; Shryock, 95. Compare this to the following description in the *Zhuangzi*: "Dao gave him a face; heaven gave him a form. He doesn't let likes and dislikes get in and do him harm." *Zhuangzi*, chapter 5. See Guo Qingfan, 221; Watson, 41.

20 *Renwuzhi*, chapter 8. See Liang Mancang, 93; Shryock, 128.

21 *Renwuzhi*, chapter 8. See Liang Mancang, 93–94; Shryock, 128.

22 For a good discussion on this movement, see Chan 2004.

23 The title of Zhong Hui's text can be translated as *Four Books on Talent and Nature*. For more on the "talent and nature" movement, see Hou Wailu, volume 3: 133–137; Wu Guanhong 2003; and Xie Daning, 19–52. To read an in-depth study of how Wei-Jin thinkers are referred to in *A New Account of Tales of the World* (*Shishuo Xinyu*), see Ning Jiayu. For a modern edition of this text, see Zhu Bilian and Shen Haibo; readers who prefer an English version can see the translation by Richard Mather.

24 *Lunyu*, book 7. See Cheng Shude, 448; Slingerland, 66.

25 For a brief discussion of the discourse on primal breath in Ji Kang's time, see Cen Yicheng, 40–42.

26 *Lunheng*, chapter 31. See Huang Hui, 472; Forke, volume 1: 252.

27 *Daodejing*, chapter 42. See Lou Yulie, 117; Lynn 1999: 135.

28 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 6. See Guo Qingfan, 244; Watson, 45.

29 Jia Yi (201–169 BCE), with assistance of the governor of Luoyang, Wu Gong 吳公, was given a post in the court of the Han dynasty emperor Wen 漢文帝 (r. 180–157 BCE). Due to political intrigues against him, he was sent to Changsha 長沙 to be the grand tutor (*taifu* 太傅) to the local prince. It was during this time that he wrote his *Rhapsody on the Owl* (*funiao fu* 鵩鳥賦). The owl is an inauspicious animal in Chinese culture, and given Jia Yi was in poor health at the time, having one roost in his house was all the more ominous. Having regretted sending Jia Yi away, emperor Wen appointed him grand tutor to king Huai of Liang 梁懷王. When the prince died after falling from his horse, the guilt Jia Yi felt over this accident took

its toll on him and he committed suicide shortly thereafter. Jia Yi's biography appears in the *Hanshu*, book 48: 2221–2266.

30 *Lunyu*, book 14. See Cheng Shude, 950; Slingerland, 154.

31 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 75; Watson, 12.

32 Huo Guang 霍光 (d. 68 BCE) was a high-ranking official during reign of the Han dynasty emperor Wu 漢武帝 (r. 141–87 BCE). After emperor Wu's death, Huo served as regent to the Han emperor Zhao 漢昭帝 (r. 87–74 BCE). It was during the time of Zhao's successor, the Han emperor Xuan 漢宣帝 (r. 74–49 BCE), that Huo's influence at court was curtailed. When Huo Guang's wife killed empress Xu 許皇后, the entire Huo family was either executed or committed suicide. Huo Guang's biography appears in the *Hanshu*, book 69: 2931–2969. See also Nylan, 257–258.

33 Robert Henricks (1983: 129n14) says this refers to Liu He 劉賀 (ca. 92–59 BCE). Liu He was the son of Liu Bo 刘髆, king of Changyi 昌邑王 (?–87 BCE) and grandson of emperor Liu Che 汉武帝刘彻 (ca. 156–87 BCE). As emperor, Liu He only ruled for 20 days before being removed due to his improprieties. Most of Liu He's officials were executed as punishment for not properly restraining him.

34 Tian Yannian 田延年 (?–72 BCE) was minister of agriculture during the reign of emperor Zhao. His biography appears in the *Hanshu*, book 90: 3665–3666.

35 Further discussion on primal breath and wisdom can be seen in Wu Guanhong 2003: 272–274.

36 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 28. See Guo Qingfan, 974; Watson, 244.

37 Fan Yuqi was a general in the Qin 秦 army. In 227 BCE, Fan Yuqi fled his home state and sought refuge in Yan 燕. As punishment for housing Fan Yuqi, the king of Qin, Ying Zheng 嬴政 (r. 246–210 BCE), demanded that Fan's head, along with a map of the Du 都 and Kang 亢 areas of the state of Yan, be sent to him. Fan Yuqi was willing to sacrifice his life if it meant saving Yan and so Jing Ke 荊軻 (d. 227 BCE) devised a plan to deliver Fan's head and the required map, and to assassinate Ying Zheng at the same time. See *Shiji*, book 86: 2529–2534.

38 Wang Ling (233–202 BCE) was a close friend of Liu Bang 劉邦, founder of the Han dynasty (emperor Gaozu 漢高祖, r. 206–195 BCE) When Liu Bang launched a rebellion in the final years of the Qin dynasty, he was defeated by a rival rebel leader named Xiang Yu 項羽 (232–202 BCE). In addition to holding Liu Bang's wife hostage, Xiang Yu also captured Wang Ling's mother. Wang Ling sent a messenger to discuss her release and when the messenger was about to leave, Wang Ling's mother gave him a message to pass on to her son, not to forgo his loyalty to Liu Bang for her sake. She thereupon took her own life with a sword. For more, see Lee and Stefanowska, 204–205. Wang Ling's biography appears in the *Hanshu*, book 40: 2046–2047.

39 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 22. See Guo Qingfan, 756; Watson, 184.

40 Others include: "great beginning" (*taichu* 泰初 or 太初), "great unity" (*taiyi* 太一), and "great emptiness" (*taixu* 太虛), to name but a few.

41 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 83; Watson, 14.

42 *Liji*, chapter 28. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 302.

43 He is also mentioned in chapters 8, 10, and 11.

44 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 29. See Guo Qingfan, 1001; Watson, 259.

45 See the end of his reprimanding Confucius: "And now I'm going to tell you something—about man's true form … How can it [your Dao] be worth discussing!" See Guo Qingfan, 1000; Watson, 258.

46 *Lunyu*, book 17. See Cheng Shude, 1217; Slingerland, 205.

47 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 29. See Guo Qingfan, 990; Watson, 252.
48 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 23. See Guo Qingfan, 774; Watson, 189.
49 This line erroneously repeats "*wudan* 無膽" and it should instead be read as "明無膽無，膽能偏守."
50 *Liji*, chapter 7. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 383.
51 *Mengzi*, book 4A. See Yang Bojun 2013: 153; Bloom, 76.
52 *Guanzi*, chapter 3. See Li Xianfeng, 52; Rickett, volume 1: 92–93.
53 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13. See Guo Qingfan, 458; Watson, 99.
54 *Daodejing*, chapter 12. See Lou Yulie, 28; Lynn 1999: 70.
55 A good example of *xuan* 玄 in the *Daodejing* appears in chapter 6: "The gate of the mysterious female [i.e., the Dao] is referred to the root of heaven and earth." See Lou Yulie, 16; Lynn 1999: 62 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 11 uses *ming* in this way to describe the Dao: "The essence of the perfect Dao is deep and darkly shrouded; the extreme of the perfect Dao is mysterious and hushed in silence. Let there be no seeing, no hearing; enfold the spirit in quietude, and the body will right itself." See Guo Qingfan, 381; Watson, 78.
56 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 17. See Guo Qingfan, 588; Watson, 132.
57 *Lunheng*, chapter 34. See Huang Hui, 534; Forke, volume 2: 57.
58 *Huainanzi*, chapter 2. See He Ning, 113; Major et al., 92.
59 *Lunyu*, book 14. See Cheng Shude, 1011; Slingerland, 165.
60 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 12. See Guo Qingfan, 447; Watson, 95.
61 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 22. See Guo Qingfan, 765; Watson, 187.
62 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 3. See Guo Qingfan, 115; Watson, 19.
63 *Yijing*, "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 561; Lynn 1994: 81.
64 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 10. See Guo Qingfan, 353; Watson, 71.
65 We learn of Zhang Miao (d. 292 CE) by way of a note appended to the "Biography of Bing Yuan 邴原傳" in the *Book of Wei* 魏書 section of the *Sanguo zhi* that quotes Xun Chuo's 荀綽 *Record of the Nine Provinces* (*Jiuzhou ji* 九州記), specifically the *Record of Ji Province* (*Jizhou ji* 冀州記). Here, he says Zhang Miao's style name was Shuliao 叔遼 and he was governor (*taishou* 太守) of Liaodong 遼東, who wrote the essay *On the Natural Joy of Learning* presently found in the *Collected Works of Ji Kang*." See *Sanguo zhi*, book 11: 354n1.
66 The term *lun* 論 in "*ruo lun suo yun* 若論所雲" is understood as "*chenshu* 陳述" meaning to state or explain. Robert Henricks (1983: 135) believes this phrase is referring to the *Mengzi*—"What people are able to do without having learned it is an expression of original, good ability" (see Yang Bojun 2013: 283; Bloom, 147)—but this is speculation on his part.
67 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 23. See Guo Qingfan, 810; Watson, 197.
68 *Liji*, chapter 7. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 379.
69 We have here a double-play of meaning: *xing* 腥 can be translated as both raw meat and fetid-smelling, while *sao* 臊 means fetid or rancid-smelling. Taken together, they are the putrid odor of rotting flesh.
70 *Huangdi Neijing*, chapter 40. See Unschuld and Tessenow, volume 1: 600.
71 *Xunzi*, chapter 4. See Wang Xianqian, 63; Hutton, 27.
72 *Hanfeizi*, chapter 49. See Wang Xianshen, 442; Liao, volume 2: 275.
73 *Liji*, chapter 7. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 369.
74 *Liezi*, chapter 7. See Yang Bojun 1985: 237; Graham, 155.
75 *Liji*, chapter 7. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 368.
76 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 9. See Guo Qingfan, 341; Watson, 67.
77 *Lunyu*, book 6. See Cheng Shude, 401; Slingerland, 59. This line is repeated in chapter 5 of the *Lunheng*.
78 *Huainanzi*, chapter 15. See He Ning, 1044; Major et al., 581.

79 *Yijing*, "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 560; Lynn 1994: 79.
80 Dai Mingyang, in a note to this line, says he is unaware (*weixiang* 未詳) of *danfei*; however, he states "*longdan* 龍膽" or Gentian, is listed in the *Shen Nong Bencaojing* 神農本草經 and believes *danfei* is referring to this. Robert Henricks concurs with him. See Dai Mingyang, 406–407; Henricks 1983: 137n14. When it comes to "*fei* 蜚," Henricks postulates it is a horsefly (*feimeng* 蜚虻). See Henricks 1983: 137n14.
81 *Liji*, chapter 25. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 273.
82 *Huainanzi*, chapter 20. See He Ning, 1418; Major et al., 829.
83 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 4. See Guo Qingfan, 150; Watson, 26.
84 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 6. See Guo Qingfan, 241; Watson, 44.
85 The classical texts of Daoism do not employ the phrases *taiyang* and *taiyin*. The *Zhuangzi* (chapters 11 and 21) instead uses "ultimate Yang" (*zhiyang* 至陽) and "ultimate Yin" (*zhiyin* 至陰).
86 *Daodejing*, chapter 65. See Lou Yulie, 168; Lynn 1999: 172.
87 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 16. See Guo Qingfan, 550; Watson, 122–123.
88 *Guanzi*, chapter 64. See Li Xianfeng, 1170; Rickett, volume 1: 67.
89 Besides Ji Kang's works, *dapu* appears in chapter 14 of the *Baopuzi Waipian*.
90 *Daodejing*, chapter 19. See Lou Yulie, 45; Lynn 1999: 82.
91 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 9. See Guo Qingfan, 336; Watson, 66.
92 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 7. See Guo Qingfan, 294; Watson, 56.
93 *Lunyu*, book 8. See Cheng Shude, 559; Slingerland, 85. This passage is also quoted in chapter 61 of the *Lunheng*.
94 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 10. See Guo Qingfan, 357; Watson, 71.
95 *Guanzi*, chapter 47. See Li Xianfeng, 923; Rickett, volume 2: 174.
96 We have thus far spoken of five Classics (*Changes* 易經, *Documents* 尚書, *Poetry* 詩經, *Ritual* 禮記, and *Spring and Autumn Annals* 左傳). The sixth Classic being alluded to is most likely the now-lost *Music* 樂記.
97 *Hanfeizi*, chapter 20. See Wang Xianshen, 135; Liao, volume 1: 174.
98 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 33. See Guo Qingfan, 1076; Watson, 288.
99 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 16. See Guo Qingfan, 547; Watson, 122.
100 *Lunyu*, book 16. See Cheng Shude, 1158; Slingerland, 196.
101 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 31. See Guo Qingfan, 1032; Watson, 276.
102 Donald Holzman says Ji Kang might be under the influence of the Yellow Turbans, who practiced public confession of sins and showed great fervor for ritual practices. See Holzman 1957: 78.
103 *Liji*, chapter 17. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 96. This sentence also appears in two later texts where "desire" (*yu* 欲) has been swapped for "harm" (*shang* 害): chapter 1 of the *Wenzi*, and chapter 1 of the *Huainanzi*.
104 *Liezi*, chapter 8. See Yang Bojun 1985: 246; Graham, 163–164.
105 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 16. See Guo Qingfan, 548; Watson, 122.
106 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 66; Watson, 10.
107 *Lunheng*, chapter 78. See Huang Hui, 551; Forke, volume 2: 72.
108 *Liji* chapter 23. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 257.
109 *Lunyu*, book 14. See Cheng Shude, 1008; Slingerland, 165.
110 *Liji*, book 17. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 99.
111 *Hanfeizi*, chapter 32. See Wang Xianshen, 280; Liao, volume 2: 52.
112 *Lunyu*, book 7. See Cheng Shude, 436; Slingerland, 64.
113 *Liezi*, chapter 8. See Yang Bojun 1985: 270; Graham, 179.
114 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 16. See Guo Qingfan, 558; Watson, 124.

4 Health and Self-Cultivation

On Nourishing Life 養生論

by Ji Kang[1]

Section 1

There are those in the world who say a person can reach immortality through study and deathlessness can be had through effort. There are others who say the ceiling of longevity is one hundred and twenty years while the past and present are the same. To go beyond this is to enter the realm of the strange and false. As both points miss the mark, allow me to roughly discuss them.

This opening statement succinctly defines the scope of Ji Kang's essay: long life is possible but immortality is not. What is more, there is a natural limit to the length of a person's life and any talk of extending it beyond this belongs to the realm of the supernatural, as the *Yijing* notes: "To go beyond this is something that no one has ever known how to do."[2] While Ji Kang believes medicinal drugs can assist a person in their pursuit of longevity, he did not feel this way about so-called elixirs of immortality.

Section 2

Regarding immortals, although our eyes cannot see them, they are noted in books and records. Their lives are narrated in the histories of former times such that when we compare and discuss them, immortals appear very real. It would seem they specifically receive a different breath, one they are naturally endowed with, and it is not the result of accumulated study. Arriving at the attainment of the principle of guiding nourishment, that a person's life can be exhausted after one thousand years or just several hundred, this is certainly possible. However, the people of the world lack vital essence and so none are able to reach such longevity. How can I explain this? If a person uses medicine to induce sweating, there are times when it will not work, however, if feelings of shame

DOI: 10.4324/9780429331428-4

collect within them, sweat pours out in gushes. If a person does not eat for the entire morning, their thoughts will clamor for food, however, when Zengzi was gagging with grief, he was not hungry even after not eating for seven days. If a person sits awake until midnight, they will feel low in spirit and think of sleep, however, if their breast is filled with grief, they can go until sunrise without closing their eyes. A strong brush can manage the hair on a person's temples and sweet wine reveals itself on the face—only these will produce such results. And yet, the anger of a brave man burns brightly in an unmistakable way such that his hair stands on end, pushing up into his cap. To speak on account of this, the relationship of vitality to physicality is like that of a ruler and his people. When the inner spirit is disturbed, the external form is lost; when the ruler above is confused, the state below will be chaotic.

Immortality has long been a subject of interest for human beings, grounding many of our legends and divinities, and is one of the newest frontiers of science and medicine. Immortals are elusive creatures, which is why Ji Kang states our eyes do not see them; however, as is the case with ghosts, just because we cannot see them does not mean they do not exist. We read about them in stories, literary records, and dynastic histories, and these accounts portray them as all too real, so much so that they would appear to have been given a different breath (*yiqi* 異氣). Recall that Ji Kang spoke of this unique breath in his essay *On Wisdom and Courage*, and that it is something one naturally receives (*bing zhi ziran* 稟之自然) at birth. Roughly one generation after Ji Kang, Ge Hong 葛洪 would also speak of this naturally conferred breath in his *Baopuzi* 抱樸子: "The *Classic of Immortals* believes that of those people who acquire immortality, all were fated to do so and it is by chance they also have the *qi* of immortality, which they received naturally."[3] By embracing that which is natural, people can maximize the potential for long life—what Ji Kang calls the principle of guiding nourishment (*daoyang de li* 導養得理)—anywhere from several hundred years to more than one thousand years. The *Zhuangzi* spoke of such longevity in the following way: "South of Chu there is a caterpillar that counts five hundred years as one spring and five hundred years as one autumn … Yet Pengzu alone is famous today for having lived a long time, and everybody tries to ape him."[4] So long as a person adheres to the principle of life, long life is possible, but longevity is not akin to immortality; for the latter to occur, one must be born with the right kind of breath.

This sounds straightforward but most people cannot attain a lifespan anywhere near what might be considered lengthy. The reason is they lack the essence (*jing* 精) necessary to ensure harmony between life's vitality (*jingshen* 精神) and its physicality (*xinghai* 形骸). In order to clarify what he means, Ji Kang uses four events: sweating, hunger, sleep, and anger. There are times when the body produces sweat naturally and other times when we induce it on purpose. Medicine can address the latter but

not in all instances, and not for all physiological conditions. However, Ji Kang writes, sweat pours out in gushes whenever the heart-mind is overwhelmed with feelings of shame. In this case, spirit is successful where the body previously failed. Both of these cases are extreme and will not benefit one's quest for longevity (*shou* 壽). The second event involves hunger. We can force our body to think of food by depriving it as such for an entire morning, or we can prevent our body from tending to its hunger by preoccupying our spirit with another matter, such as the case of Zengzi 曾子 whose grief was so intense he did not eat for seven days. Both of these examples are extreme and will hasten one's death, not prolong life.

The theme of depriving oneself of food is a common one in ancient texts. In the *Lunyu* we read of Confucius not eating for an entire day while in the *Shuo Yuan* 說苑 by Liu Xiang 劉向, we are told that when Confucius was trapped between the states of Chen 陳 and Cai 蔡, he did not eat for seven days. In both the *Mengzi* and the *Lunheng* we are told that Chen Zhongzi 陳仲子 did not eat for three days. The *Liji* stipulates that sons do not eat for three days after the death of their father and two days after the passing of their mother. Finally, the *Huainanzi* speaks of Nanrong Chou 南榮疇 not eating for seven days after his encounter with Laozi.[5] Zengzi's not eating for seven days is thus not out of the ordinary and the reason he did so is this: "Zengzi said to Zisi: 'Ji, when I was engaged in the mourning for my parents, no water or other liquid entered my mouth for seven days.'"[6]

This brings us to sleep, the third event. As with the previous events, sleep can be encouraged or avoided depending on whether spirit or the body is in control. If it is the body, staying up for half the night brings on drowsiness and thoughts of rest; however, if our heart-mind is filled with grief, we can last the entire night without closing our eyes. The fourth and final event is that of anger. Just as a comb is used to keep one's hair in place, and wine shows the contentment of the heart-mind by causing the face to blush, so will anger cause the face to burn red and force one's hair to stand on end with fury. Perhaps Ji Kang had in mind the following account from the *Huainanzi* when he said:

> When Jing Ke went west to [try to] stab to death the king of Qin, Gao Jianli and Song Yi struck the *zhu* and sang on the banks of the Yi River. Of those who heard this music there were none who did not stare angrily with wide open eyes and with hair standing on end under their caps.[7]

What the above reveals is that spirit and the body enjoy a relationship not dissimilar to a ruler and the people. When spirit loses is composure, the body loses control of its outward condition, which is analogous to the ruler confusedly governing his state causing the people to live chaotically.

Section 3

As for planting crops during the time of Tang, partial success was had by watering them once. Although in the end they became haggard and decayed, those that were watered once were the last to wither. Thus, the benefit of a single watering is beyond doubt. However, the world persistently says being angry once is not sufficient to threaten a person's nature, and being grieved once is not sufficient to injure a person's health. This is to treat them lightly and with wantonness, and is similar to not knowing the benefit of a single watering but wishing for excellent grain from dried shoots. It is for this reason that the gentleman knows the form relies on spirit to establish itself and spirit needs the form in order to exist. What is more, he recognizes that the principle of life is easily lost and that a single error can harm one's life. He thus cultivates his nature so as to protect his spirit, and calms his heart-mind to ensure his body remains complete. Love and hate do not reside in his feelings, just as anguish and delight do not linger in his thoughts. Indifferent and unmoved, his body and breath are at peace. He exhales the old and inhales the new, ingesting medicine to nourish his body. This results in his form and spirit becoming intimate and shows how both can assist one another.

When Tang 湯 overthrew Jie 桀 to found the Shang 商 dynasty, the drought that had begun in the final years of the Xia 夏 dynasty would continue for five more years. Growing crops was impossible, despite the best efforts of the farmers. Using this historical reference as an analogy for the connection between spirit and the body, Ji Kang is equating the body to the barren earth and spirit to the life-nourishing power of water. All it takes to give life a fighting chance is an injection of vital essence, hence crops that are watered once live longer than those receiving no water at all. No one can dispute this fact yet few people extend it to human life. Indeed, Ji Kang is going to argue against the consensus that occasional fits of anger will not encroach upon one's nature, or that occasional bouts of grief will not damage one's health. Those who think in such a manner treat the potential harm anger and grief can cause the body and spirit with wanton recklessness for, in the words of the *Huainanzi*: "Violent anger ruins the Yin; extreme joy collapses the Yang."[8] Not knowing this, the majority of people are like the ignorant farmer during the time of Tang—they hope to derive lush grain from dried shoots without realizing that a single watering can help them get there.

The gentleman, however, avoids this mistake in that he knows the body needs spirit to establish itself, and spirit needs the body in order to exist. Not only this, the gentleman also knows that the principle of life (*shengli* 生理) is fragile and easily lost, and that all it takes to injure or end life is a single error. Once again, we find Ji Kang's thoughts paralleling those of the *Huainanzi*, which writes: "The physical body is the

abode of vitality; the vital energy is the source of vitality; and the spirit is what regulates vitality. If one of these loses its position, then the other two will be harmed."[9] Such being the case, the gentleman works on cultivating his inborn nature in order to keep his spirit intact (*baoshen* 保神) and quiets his heart-mind to keep his body whole. The term *baoshen*, while first appearing in the poem "Distant Wandering" (*yuanyou* 遠遊) by Qu Yuan 屈原, would have been familiar to Ji Kang by way of the *Zhuangzi*: "The forms and bodies held within them spirits, each with its own characteristics and limitations, and this was called the inborn nature."[10] As for embracing the spirit and stilling the heart-mind, the *Zhuangzi* also tells us that we should "enfold the spirit in quietude, and the body will right itself. Be still, be pure, do not labor your body, do not churn up your essence, and then you can live a long life."[11]

Progressing from this, the gentleman finds himself having feelings that are free of love and hate, and thoughts that do not contain anguish and delight. These are precursors to a state of emotional indifference whereby the body and breath coexist peacefully. When it comes to love and hate not taking up residence in one's feelings thereby resulting in emotional indifference, the *Liezi* says it is a matter of physical preference: "They [the common people] do not know how to prefer themselves to others, and so they neither love nor hate."[12] More relevant to what Ji Kang is saying, the *Huainanzi* says it is a question of the heart-mind: "When the [heart-] mind is without likes and dislikes, it achieves the perfection of equanimity."[13] So, what of this composed indifference (*boran wu gan* 泊然無感)? The *Liji* offers some insight into how this comes about:

> Therefore, when the music has full course, the different relations are clearly defined by it; the perceptions of the ears and eyes become sharp and distinct; the action of the blood and physical energies is harmonious and calm; (bad) influences are removed, and manners changed; and all under heaven there is entire repose.[14]

While the *Liji* speaks of music's ability to bring peacefulness to our blood and breath, Ji Kang opts for approaches familiar to practitioners of Daoist bodily cultivation: exhaling old breath followed by inhaling of the new, and ingesting medicinal ingredients to nourish the body. There are a variety of textual sources Ji Kang might have drawn upon for this approach, the *Zhuangzi* being one of the oldest: "To pant, to puff, to hail, to sip, to spit out the old breath and draw in the new, practicing bear-hanging and bird-stretching, longevity his only concern."[15] The *Huainanzi* also touches upon this technique of breathing—"Breathing out and expelling the stale, breathing in and inhaling the new"[16]—but it is the *Lunheng* that offers the most explicit explanation of what Ji Kang is implying: "The Daoists sometimes use medicines with a view to rendering their bodies more supple and their vital force stronger, hoping

thus to prolong their years and to enter a new existence."[17] The conclusion that Ji Kang wants to make is this: given the co-dependency of the body and spirit, the best way for them to assist one another is if they become close to one another.[18]

Section 4

Of those who plant seeds, if they can get ten hu for every mu of land, this is known as a decent crop and is a common saying throughout the world. They do not know parcel planting, which can yield one hundred hu for every mu of land. While the field and seeds are the same in both cases, the planting and nurturing are not, hence their collective achievements greatly differ. Saying the businessman longs to increase their prices ten-fold while the farmer wishes to increase their land by one hundred hu, this is to adhere to standard practices and avoid change. What is more, beans make you heavy, elm tree bark makes you drowsy, silk tree bark eliminates fury, and daylily helps you forget anxiety. The foolish and wise all know this. Smoked and pungent food harms the eyes while blowfish has no nourishment, and this is known throughout the common world. Lice turn black dwelling on people's heads, musk deer eat cypress and become fragrant, the necks of people dwelling in narrow passes have goiters, and the teeth of people who live in the state of Jin are yellow. To speak on account of this, the breath of everything we eat steams our nature and infects our body, hence all things are moved by other things. How is it that only by steaming do things become heavy yet nothing makes them light, that injury makes things dim yet nothing makes them wise, that smoking makes things yellow yet nothing makes them firm, or that flowers and grass make things fragrant but nothing can prolong them? Thus, Shen Nong said: "The superior drugs nourish fate and middle drugs nourish human nature." This is to truly know the principle of life and use it to assist nourishment to its utmost.

The above outlines the many things that can happen when a person ignores the spirit, body, or the harmony between them. Continuing with the agriculture analogy from the previous section, Ji Kang compares people who view a crop yield of ten *hu* 斛 per *mu* 畝 of land[19] to those who can produce one hundred *hu* per *mu* simply by sub-dividing their land. Despite using the same seeds and soil, paying greater attention to the planting and nourishing process, as opposed to the quantity of the final product, injects an element of vitality that would otherwise be missing. This vitality also applies to the breath of the human body and how the food we consume or place in which we live can damage or strengthen it, affecting our health and chances for a long life. For example, beans (*dou* 豆) and the elm tree (*yu* 榆) make us feel unpleasant while the silk tree (*hehuan* 合歡) and daylily (*xuancao* 萱草) have beneficial properties. Lice (*shi* 蝨) living on a person's head turns black while musk deer

(*she* 麝) living in the forest smell of cypress. Finally, people who live in narrow passes have goiters (*ying* 癭) while those living in the state of Jin 晉 have yellow teeth. In other words, what is good for one thing or place is not necessarily so for other things or places, and this variation is due to fluctuations of breath, hence the superior drugs (*shangyao* 上藥) nourish fate and the middle drugs (*zhongyao* 中藥) nourish human nature.[20]

Section 5

Yet the people of the world do not examine these but only see the five grains, indulge in sounds and colors such that their eyes are confused by what is black and gold, and their ears seek the obscene and depraved. Strong flavors burn their intestines, sweet wine boils their stomach, sweet fragrances decay their bone marrow, delight and anger conflicts with their proper breath such that their thoughts worry about weakening their vitality, and grief and joy bring disaster to their peaceful purity. As for this small body of ours, it is not assaulted in one stroke, which would make it a body easily exhausted and susceptible to attack from without and within, but given it is not made of wood or stone, how long can it last? Those who use themselves to the extreme, drinking and eating without reservation, will give rise to the one hundred diseases. Those who do not grow weary of lustfulness will succumb to exhaustion, suffer the calamity of wind and cold, and be wounded by the one hundred poisons. They die prematurely in the middle of life from a multitude of difficulties and the whole world knows to laugh and pity them, saying they were not good at sustaining life. When it comes to those who employ their body but neglect its principle, they will lose it to the hidden. When the hidden accumulates it becomes injurious, injury that accumulates turns into decline, decline results in white hair, white hair leads to old age, and amidst such gloom it seems as if there is no starting point, thus people of middle intelligence and lower refer to it as natural. To indulge the few who comprehend this matter, they sigh in resentment at their first encounter but do not know they should be mindful of the numerous dangers yet to become visible.

Shen Nong might very well know the principle of life and how to employ it to nourish life, but the common people do not. Instead, their attention is directed to occurrences of a physical nature: the five grains (*wugu* 五穀) satiate their mouths while the five sounds and colors appease their ears and eyes. The harm caused by such indulgence was already raised in the *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*, and Ji Kang concurs with their assessment. Where he goes further is demonstrating how self-indulgence impacts the well-being of the body. For example, if a person consumes too much food of a strong flavor (*ziwei* 滋味), their intestines will burn. As we read in the *Zhuangzi*, the mouth's craving for strong flavored food is quite natural: "Beautiful sounds and colors, rich flavors, power and

authority—a man need not send his mind to school before it will delight in them."[21] What is more, drinking sweet wine (*lilao* 醴醪) causes the stomach to boil, and sweet fragrances (*xiangfang* 香芳) results in the decaying of one's bone marrow.

If the physical body is susceptible to these hidden forms of harm, how about its non-corporeal side? According to Ji Kang, feelings of delight and anger are contrary (*bei* 悖) to the body's proper breath (*zhengqi* 正氣), the consequence of which is an artificial anxiety over its vitality. On this point, we can refer to the *Huainanzi*, which says: "Joy and anger are aberrations from the Dao."[22] Additionally, Ji Kang writes, the feelings of grief and joy prove disastrous to the peaceful purity (*pingcui* 平粹) of body and breath alike, a notion that, once again, was expressed earlier in the *Huainanzi*: "When the mind is without likes and dislikes, it achieves the perfection of equanimity. When the mind is not tangled up in things, it achieves the perfection of purity."[23] Said differently, the *Guanzi* writes: "It is ever so that man's life is certain to depend on equanimity and good judgement. Its loss is certain to be because of joy and anger, sorrow and suffering."[24] As for resolving these issues, the *Zhuangzi* advises us to "be content with this time and dwell in this order, and then neither sorrow nor joy can touch you."[25] Ji Kang, however, does not believe harm stops with feelings but it is the accumulation of successive attacks from without and within that ultimately exhausts the body, resulting in premature death.

As unfortunate as this fate is, it is largely of one's own doing. For example, over-extending oneself and consuming food and drink with reckless abandon gives birth to the one hundred diseases (*baibing* 百病), an expression Ji Kang most likely borrowed from the *Lunheng*:

> According to man's original nature his body is supple of itself, and his vital force [*qi*] lasts long of its own accord. But by exposure to wind and wetness he falls a victim to hundreds of diseases, whence his body becomes heavy and stiff, and his force is weakened.[26]

Alternatively, people who engage in limitless acts of lust will physically exhaust their bodies to the extent that wind and cold penetrate their insides and they are wounded by the one hundred poisons. The end result is that such people die in the middle of life because of a variety of reasons and are mocked by the world for not being good at sustaining life.

The phrase "die young in the middle of life" (*zhongdao yao* 中道夭) was coined by the *Zhuangzi* and appears three times in the text, an example of which is: "So they never get to live out the years heaven gave them but are cut down in mid-journey by axes. This is the danger of being usable."[27] Besides the *Zhuangzi*, the only other ancient text to mention this phrase was the *Huainanzi*: "Why is it that common

people are not able to complete the full course of their lives and, along the way, die young by execution? It is because they set too much store in living."[28] If a person takes care of their body but still manages to neglect the principle of life, they too will succumb to what is unseen. The hidden or subtle (*wei* 微) not only applies to the Dao but the root of things small and large. Left unchecked, its accumulation can morph into something dangerous, and when the dangerous amasses, the decline of the principle of life commences. First manifesting as white hair, it quickly leads to an aged body, and once the body has grown old and weak, the source of said decline appears distant and mysterious and thus natural to those lacking in sagely intelligence. Even those few individuals who attempt to practice the principle of nourishing life sigh in resentment at the first sign of decline yet forget the need to be vigilant against any hidden dangers waiting to make themselves known.

This is like marquis Huan possessing a fatal illness but being angry at Bian Que for seeing it first because he believes the day one is made aware of an illness is the day the illness begins. Injury arises from what is hidden but people only seek help after it becomes visible, thus their treatment is unsuccessful. They rush around in the realm of the common people and so their longevity is equally common. They look up to see and look down to examine, stating that everyone does so. Taking what the many do as self-evident, the uniformity of these acts gives them self-comfort and so they call this the principle of heaven and earth, and that is the extent of the matter. Even if they indulge themselves in matters they hear concerning the nourishing of life, by restricting themselves to what can be seen, they will say what they hear is untrue.

Those who limit themselves to what can be seen and ignore the hidden are like the story of duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 who had a fatal illness but was angry at his doctor, Bian Que 扁鵲,[29] for discovering this fact before him. The reason, Ji Kang says, was not that duke Huan was outsmarted by the doctor but that he believes an illness begins from the day it is diagnosed. Ji Kang criticizes such people as dwelling in the realm of commonness and so their life has a longevity that is equally common. Looking up and down but never within, such person's take the actions of others as self-evident and comforting. Looking up and down (*yangguan fucha* 仰觀俯察) is an expression originally found in the *Yijing*: "Looking up, we use it (the *Yijing*) to observe the configurations of heaven, and looking down, we use it to examine the patterns of earth."[30] However, when Ji Kang writes that the common people of the world take each other as exemplifying the principle of heaven and earth (*tiandi zhi li* 天地之理), he is not praising their behavior as adhering to the advice offered in the *Yijing*; rather, he is attacking them for restricting themselves to what can be seen while denying the potential harm of the hidden.

Next are people whose doubts are few yet they still do not know where to begin. Following these people are those who purposely ingest medicine but after half or one year's work and not seeing any results, their will becomes dejected and weak and they stop midway into their journey. Others try to increase [the effects of medicine] by adding irrigation ditches, however, they allow it to escape at Weilü in hopes of an auspicious sign. Repressing their feelings and clinging to their desires, they abandon and discard their desire for fame, however, such desires and pleasures are always before their eyes and ears while what they crave the most lies many years away. Afraid of losing both they have doubts within, and with a heart-mind that is divided on the inside while things tempt them on the outside, near and far topple one another and their endeavors fail. While the ultimate is hidden and subtle, it is only knowable through principle and is difficult to recognize with one's eyes. It is similar to the silky spice bush and camphor tree whose differences can only be noticed after they have grown for seven years. Nowadays people cross the road of silence and tranquility with a heart-mind that is unsettled and divided, and though they wish to hurry, such matters require time. Thus, although what people hope for is near, the answer lies afar and so none make it to the end, hence many stop searching for it due to the lack of results. Of those who search for it, they either end up losing it due to lack of concentration, they biasedly rely on things instead of combining them and so fail to succeed, or they simply chase a particular technique and end up drowning themselves in these minor paths. Everyone belongs to one of these categories, but of those who desire to be otherwise, just one in ten thousand are able to succeed.

Continuing with his critique, Ji Kang speaks of three groups of people who overlook the invisible aspects of nourishing life. The first group contains people who support the principle of nourishing life but are nevertheless skeptical about aspects of it. The second group are those who take medicine to enhance and prolong life but nevertheless abandon such pursuits after a short period of time due to the lack of tangible results. Finally, there are those who seek to surpass the efforts of the second group by adding irrigation ditches (*quanhui* 畎澮),[31] however, they allow their vital essence and breath to escape at Weilü 尾閭 in hopes of receiving an auspicious outcome. The name Weilü comes from the *Zhuangzi*: "The water leaks away at Weilü—I have never heard of a time when it didn't—and yet the sea is never empty."[32] No matter which group we choose to discuss, all of them will ultimately see their members repress their feelings and desires, and forsake their quest for fame.

Although the things people yearn for and relish are always present before them, what they truly crave lies beyond their reach in a manner not dissimilar to how the silky spice bush (*yu* 豫) and camphor tree (*zhang* 章) can only be distinguished after they have been left to grow for seven

years. Given this, their heart-mind is divided on the inside and tempted by things on the outside. To better understand what Ji Kang means by a "divided heart-mind" (*xinzhan* 心戰), we can refer to the *Hanfeizi*:

> Whenever I [Zixia] went in and saw the virtue of the early kings I rejoiced in it. Whenever I went out and saw the pleasure of the rich and noble, I rejoiced in it too. These two conflicting attractions waged a war within my breast. When victory and defeat still hung in the balance, I was thin. Since the virtue of the early kings won the war, I have become stout.[33]

A second example comes from the *Huainanzi*: "Thus when Zixia had conflict in his mind he grew thin."[34]

Internally divided and outwardly tempted, the heart-mind of such people remains unaware of the hidden and subtle nature of the ultimate (the Dao), relying on their eyes instead of using the principle of nourishing life to discover its presence in the world. As the *Daodejing* says, "when we listen for it but hear it not, we call it the inaudible."[35] Since principle cannot be discovered in one effort but requires time and patience, just as the answers for a long life are not to be found near at hand but on the horizon, those who think otherwise abandon their efforts in disappointment at the lack of immediate results. Even those possessing a modicum of determination will fail on account of weak concentration, selfishly using things instead of conjoining with them, or pursuing techniques that will only result in smothering their progress due to the inherent limitations of such minor paths (*xiaodao* 小道). We are warned of the perils of these narrow means in the *Lunyu*: "Although the byways no doubt have their own interesting sights to see, one who wishes to reach a distant destination fears becoming mired."[36] In the end, of those attempting to acquire longevity, just one in ten thousand will succeed.

Section 6

The person good at nourishing life is not like this. Clear, empty, quiescent, and still, he lessens his self-interests and makes few his desires. He knows that fame and position harm virtue and so he ignores them and does not seek them out; this is not because he desires them but because he strongly forbids them. Recognizing that rich flavors harm a person's nature, he abandons them and pays them no heed. This is not because he first craves and then represses them but because external things burden the heart-mind and so he does not preserve them. As spirit and breath are pure in nature, he focuses on these alone and is free of worry and hardship, dwelling in the silence of non-thought. He guards this oneness and nourishes himself with harmony. Just as harmony and principle aid each other daily, so he submits to the great

accord. After this, he steams some Lingzhi mushrooms, bathes with them in sweet spring water, and dries himself in the morning sun before appeasing himself with a five-stringed instrument. Being content in non-deliberate action, his body is made marvelous and his heart-mind mysterious, hence he forgets happiness in order to satisfy his joy and abandons life so as to preserve his body. Moving forward from here, his lifespan almost compares to that of Xianmen or the years of king Qiao. How can such a person not exist?

With the average person largely failing to extend their lifespan, Ji Kang moves his discussion to those who are capable of doing so. He describes said persons as being clear, empty, quiescent, and still, while also lessening their self-interests so as to reduce the presence of desire. This sentence is a combination of descriptive terms from the *Zhuangzi*—"Emptiness, stillness, limpidity, silence, inaction are the root of the ten thousand things"[37]—as well as the *Daodejing*: "Exemplify simplicity, embrace the uncarved block. Curtail self-interest, and have few desires."[38] Ji Kang is not only using these terms in a direct sense, their collective meaning reflects the life praxis of the *Zhuangzi*:

> Be still, be pure, do not labor your body, do not churn up your essence, and then you can live a long life. When the eye does not see, the ear does not hear, and the mind does not know, then your spirit will protect the body, and the body will enjoy long life.[39]

In light of this, pursuing longevity necessitates the abandonment of fame (*ming* 名) and social position (*li* 位) to avoid injuring one's virtue. What is more, rich flavors (*houwei* 厚味) must also be cast aside insofar as they harm one's inborn nature. In this way, the follower of the principle of nourishing life does not permit external things to enter his heart-mind and entrap it.

Should a person allow what is outside to take ownership of what lies within, they will create, in the words of the *Zhuangzi*, an artificial heart-mind (*jixin* 機心). Thus, Ji Kang's exemplary person devotes himself to cultivating his spirit and breath and, in doing so, remains free of worry and hardship, allowing him to dwell in the silence of non-thought (*wusi* 無思). When it comes to the purity of spirit and breath, the *Zhuangzi* tells us why the sage values them so much:

> The sage rests; with rest comes peaceful ease, with peaceful ease comes limpidity, and where there is ease and limpidity, care and worry cannot get at him, noxious airs cannot assault him. Therefore his virtue is complete and his spirit unimpaired.[40]

The *Huainanzi* contributes to our understanding when it writes: "Among the people of antiquity were some who situated themselves in the chaotic

and obscure. Their spirit and vital energy did not leak out to their exteriors."[41] In other words, it is only when a person's spirit is robust and breath intact can they dwell in thoughtlessness.

As for why the lack of thought is important for life prolongation, we can again find an answer in the *Zhuangzi*:

> Only when there is no pondering and no cogitation will you get to know the Dao. Only when you have no surroundings and follow no practices will you find rest in the Dao. Only when there is no path and no procedure can you get to the Dao.[42]

From knowing the Dao, to resting in it, to making it one's own, these are the steps to attaining oneness with the Dao and partaking in the great accord (*daxun* 大順). The great accord, a term coined by Laozi, revolves around the concept of mysterious virtue (*xuande* 玄德), which is another name for the principle of cosmological profoundness. Letting the *Daodejing* speak for itself: "Mysterious virtue is indeed profound, indeed far-reaching! Such a one helps the people revert, for only then will perfect compliance be attained."[43] The *Zhuangzi* picks-up the term *daxun* and elaborates its meaning to be: "Your joining is wild and confused, as though you were stupid, as though you were demented. This is called dark virtue. Rude and unwitting, you take part in the great submission."[44]

The significance of the above for Ji Kang is that it allows him to further describe the practitioner of life-prolongation in the language of classical Daoism, that is, he is a person who embraces non-deliberate action, transforms his physical self into the marvelous self (*timiao* 體妙), and whose heart-mind is utterly mysterious (*xinxuan* 心玄).[45] He does this to reach his goal of abandoning life (*yisheng* 遺生) in order to preserve his body (*shencun* 身存). Put into the words of the *Zhuangzi*: "If you abandon the affairs of the world, your body will be without toil. If you forget life, your vitality will be unimpaired. With your body complete and your vitality made whole again, you may become one with heaven."[46] Thus, Ji Kang concludes, if Xianmen 羨門 and king Qiao 王喬 can attain an extremely long life, why should the person described above not be able to do so as well?

Rebuttal to On Nourishing Life 黃門郎向子期難養生

by Xiang Ziqi

Section 1

My rebuttal is this: As to reserving grief and joy, harmonizing delight and anger, controlling drink and food, and being attuned to cold and hot, these were all studied by the ancients. When it comes to cutting-off

the five grains, rejecting rich flavors, suppressing emotions and passions, and curbing wealth and status, they dared not allow them. How can I explain this?

Xiang Ziqi 向子期[47] opens his rebuttal by combining references from two rather unlikely texts. The first is the *Guanzi*, which has this to say about nourishing life: "If rising and retiring follow regular hours, if eating and drinking are done in moderation, and if cold and heat are met with suitable [clothing], the body will benefit and life will be lengthened."[48] The second text is one that Ji Kang has shown particular fondness for, the *Huainanzi*: "To regulate your body and nourish your nature, moderate your sleep and rest, be appropriate in your food and drink, harmonize your happiness and anger, and make suitable your movement and stillness."[49] The point being made by Xiang Xiu is this: the ancients were well aware of the risks to life and the measures needed to ensure its continuation. Agreeing with Ji Kang thus far, over the next six sections of his discussion, Xiang Xiu will revisit the key points raised by Ji Kang and offer a slightly different assessment of this praxis of life prolongation.

Section 2

While humans receive their form from a creator and live alongside the myriad things of the world, they are the most intelligent of things born. However, humans differ from grass and trees in that grass and trees cannot hide from the wind and rain, nor decline an axe. Humans also differ from birds and beasts in that birds and beasts cannot avoid nets and traps, nor escape the cold and heat. Humans move in order to make contact with things and use wisdom to assist us. This is the benefit of having life and the achievement of having wisdom. If you close and quiet them, then this is the same as being without wisdom. What is the value of having wisdom? When there is life there are feelings, and when feelings are in accordance, a person naturally acquires them. But to sever and put them outside oneself, this is equal to not having life. What is the value in having life?

Drawing upon the *Zhuangzi*, Xiang Xiu notes how human beings depend upon a creator (i.e., Dao) for their physical form. In the *Zhuangzi* we are told that "once a man receives this fixed bodily form, he holds on to it, waiting for the end."[50] Later in the text we read: "So now I think of heaven and earth as a great furnace, and the creator as a skilled smith."[51] Xiang Xiu goes on to say that humans are the most intelligent of the living things produced by this creator, an idea he did not derive from the *Zhuangzi* but took from the *Liezi*: "Man resembles the other species between heaven and earth, and like them owes his nature to the Five Elements. He is the more intelligent of living things."[52] Be this as it may, humans enjoy a life that is under our own control. We are not like

the grass and trees, who suffer the hardship of wind and rain and whose life is cut short by axes; we are also not like the birds and beasts, who also suffer the hardship of the elements and whose fates are prematurely ended by nets and traps. Humans, Xiang Xiu says, are unique in having wisdom.

By avoiding the dangers of life, we can preserve it; in using wisdom to guide life, we can prolong it. However, Xiang Xiu writes that a person who decides to block the benefits and silence the achievements of life is akin to being without wisdom, making them no different from the grass and trees, birds and beasts. In light of this, why should anyone value wisdom? Life, however, is not solely a matter of wisdom but includes feelings too. Thus, wherever life exists there are bound to be feelings, and when feelings are in accordance with a person's life, they will naturally manifest themselves. And yet, should a person decide to sever and banish their feelings, they will be no different from those things without life. Given this, why would anyone value life?

Section 3

As for fondness and passion, liking honor and hating insults, liking ease and hating labor, all are born naturally. The great virtue of heaven and earth is called generation. The great treasure of the sage is called his position. Of things respected and thought eminent, none are greater than riches and honor. Thus, riches and honor are the feelings of heaven and earth. Having honor means others go along with you and act with righteousness to those beneath; having riches means that a person's desires can be obtained while assembling others around them. This was what the former kings took to be important, naturally open, and must not be put outside oneself. They also said: Riches and honor are what people all desire. However, they must seek them in accordance with the Dao and not do so carelessly or in a way that goes against righteousness. Superiors are not arrogant and hence are free of harm; they grasp what is full and diminish it frugally so as not to let it overflow. This being so, how can they injure virtue? Some see riches and honor as excessive, giving them reason to fear and turn their backs on them, but this is like one person seeing another choke on food and decide not to eat for the rest of their life.

Having posed the question of the value of wisdom and life, Xiang Xiu spends the remainder of his essay offering an answer. He begins by following Ji Kang's lead in returning to antiquity and the time of the sage-kings. With human dispositions of fondness and passion, and honor and ease arising naturally, such generation is known as the great virtue of heaven and earth (*tiandi zhi dade* 天地之大德), while the great treasure of the sage is known as his position. With great virtue and great treasure present in the world, there is nothing more important than the

position of richness and nobility.[53] What does it mean to have value? Having value is to attract other people to accompany you and treat those below you with righteousness. What does it mean to have wealth? Having wealth is to acquire all that one desires, while having riches is to be surrounded by people. This line, like those speaking of great virtue and great treasure, has its roots in the *Yijing*: "The means by which such a one preserves this position we call benevolence; the means by which he gathers people to him we call resources."[54] The aforementioned were what the ancient sage-kings saw as being essential to life.

They furthermore stated that what people desire is wealth and status, however, these must be sought without violating the Dao or injuring righteousness. Formulating people's thoughts and conduct in this manner conforms to the view espoused in the *Lunyu* where Confucius says: "Wealth and social eminence are things that all people desire, and yet unless they are acquired in the proper way I will not abide them."[55] If people can conduct themselves in this way, arrogance will lose its grip on the ruling class such that they will comprehend how to prevent what is full from overflowing.[56] Such being the case, how can the sage-king injure virtue? Although others may regard wealth and status as superfluous and easily dismissed, Xiang Xiu argues doing so is similar to saying a person should not eat food due to the risk of choking, a notion raised as early as the *Lüshi Chunqiu*: "Just as it would be perverse to forbid all food because someone died from rancid food."[57]

Section 4

Shen Nong was the first to promote grains for consumption and Hou Ji established the practice of sowing plants. Birds and beasts use grains to fly and walk, and the common people use grains to see and breathe. The duke of Zhou and Confucius use grains to exhaust the wonderment of things, while Yan and Ran use grains to establish their virtue. Worthies and sages treasured this practice and for hundreds of generations they were not discarded. Now in this one morning you say: If the five grains are not suitable for nourishing life and food and drink do not ease the nature of things, then drinking harmonious soup to overcome the sallowness of old age and having spring wine to increase a person's longevity, these will simply be empty words. Broad and eminent, fat and strong, these are what the deity on high feasts on. When only millet is aromatic, prosperity descends, and the spirits are revered. If the spirits revere and give them importance, how much more so should humanity? When meat and grain are put into the body, not more than ten days later will our fullness be seen. This is the natural sign of their suitability for life.

Xiang Xiu now reaches Sheng Nong 神農 and Hou Ji 后稷, two legendary figures credited with inventing agriculture in China: "The divine farmer first taught the people to plant and cultivate the five grains."[58] In light of

the discoveries made by these two individuals, the various types of grain became widespread and plentiful, so much so that the duke of Zhou and Confucius used them to exhaust the wonderment of things while Yan and Ran[59] established their virtue because of them. This wonderment of things (*qiongshen* 窮神) is explained by the *Yijing* as follows: "To plumb the numinous to the utmost and to understand transformation represent the very acme of virtue."[60] The planting and harvesting of grain has been practiced for hundreds of generations in China, yet Ji Kang stands before Xiang Xiu disputing the veracity of two highly regarded sayings: "[Drinking] harmonious soup, the sallowness of old age will have no boundary" and "taking spring wine increases a person's longevity."[61] For Xiang Xiu, however, millet brings prosperity to the world and is thus revered by the spirits. Since humans revere the spirits, we should also revere the grains. In terms of their ability to nourish life, if we eat them along with meat for ten days, that will be enough to fatten up any person. What better way to show their importance than this?

Section 5

When humans obtain the five elements they are born, their mouth thinks of the five flavors, their eyes think of the five colors, when moved they think of the bedroom, and when hungry they look for food. This is natural principle. However, humanity must be restrained using the rites. Now although the five colors are exhibited, the eyes dare not see them; although the five flavors exist, the mouth cannot taste them. You might dispute me with words to acquire victory, this is possible; however, how can you take a peony for a thistle or smartweed, or Xishi for Momu, and disregard them without any desire? If the heart-mind recognizes something as desirable yet cannot pursue it, then that person's nature and breath will be stuck in an idle space while their feelings and will stagnate due to their inability to pass through it. To say this is nourishing life with harmony is not something I have heard before.

Human life occurs, not because of the five grains, but the five elements. A marked feature of Han dynasty thought, Xiang Xiu's reference could be to any number of texts, but the following passage from the *Lunheng* is perhaps most representative: "Man is intelligent and sagacious, because he has in himself the fluid [*qi*] of the five virtues."[62] Our breath is what enables the five virtues—benevolence (*ren* 仁), righteousness (*yi* 義), ritual propriety (*li* 禮), wisdom (*zhi* 智), and trustworthiness (*xin* 信)—and the five elements—metal (*jin* 金), wood (*mu* 木), water (*shui* 水), fire (*huo* 火), and earth (*tu* 土)—to be knowable, in addition to those key sensory stimuli that enrich our experience of the world. We can say, therefore, that this capacity is an inherent part of our nature: "Thus, the desire of the ear for the five sounds, of the eye for the five colors, and of the mouth for the five flavors, belongs to our essential

nature."[63] However, the person wishing to nourish life must overlook the five colors seen by the eye, and dilute the five flavors tasted by the mouth because longing for such things will, as Ji Kang said in his opening essay, give rise to the one hundred diseases.

Xiang Xiu, however, sees this as tantamount to mistaking a peony for a bitter, thorny plant, or saying that the beauty of Xishi 西施 is no different from the ugliness of Momu 嫫母.[64] On Xishi's beauty, the *Zhuangzi* writes:

> The beautiful Xishi, troubled with heartburn, frowned at her neighbors. An ugly woman of the neighborhood, seeing that Xishi was beautiful, went home and likewise pounded her breast and frowned at her neighbors. But at the sight of her, the rich men of the neighborhood shut tight their gates and would not venture out, while the poor men grabbed their wives and children by the hand and scampered off. The woman understood that someone frowning could be beautiful, but she did not understand where the beauty of the frown came from.[65]

Xiang Xiu's logic is quite simple. If the heart-mind desires something but is unable to pursue it, the repercussions will be far-reaching, as the *Daodejing* reminds us: "Do not let them see desirable things, and so spare the heart-mind of the common folk from disorder."[66] The disorder spoken of by Laozi is, for Xiang Xiu, the inborn nature and breath in our body cause our feelings to languish due to inactivity. Ji Kang might claim this is part of nourishing life but Xiang Xiu states he has never heard of such a thing.

Section 6

You also said: Arriving at the attainment of the principle of guiding nourishment, a person's life can be exhausted after one thousand years or just several hundred. This is not completely right. If it truly was the case, there must some people who have reached it. Where are these people that my eyes have yet to see? This is only a discourse of shadows and echoes, one that can be spoken of but not obtained. Given enough time, there will be those who live long and become very old for they have received a different breath, yet just as there are the pine and cypress tree, neither of them are caused by guiding nourishment. If the length of a person's life is determined by their level of skill or clumsiness, then the sages who plumb principle and exhaust their nature should enjoy long lives, but amongst Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Zhou, and Confucius, the oldest reached one hundred years while the youngest was just seventy. Is this to say they neglected [the principle of] guiding

nourishment? Thus, in hindsight, heavenly fate has its limit and is not something things can add to.

Quoting Ji Kang from Section 2 of his original essay—“arriving at the attainment of the principle of guiding nourishment, a person’s life can be exhausted after one thousand years or just several hundred”—Xiang Xiu promptly disputes this statement, adding an air of disbelief for good measure. Claiming the idea that people can live for one thousand years to be a discourse of shadows and echoes (*yingxiang zhi lun* 影響之論), otherwise known as hearsay, Xiang Xiu says that with enough time, there is bound to be someone who achieves long life but this is because, as Ji Kang stated in Section 2 of his essay, they have “received a different breath” and is not due to their being a different kind human being.

Pine (*song* 松) and cypress (*bai* 栢) are both species of tree yet the former can live much longer than the latter. This difference is not due to their guiding nourishment but their Dao-given nature. When applied to humans, Xiang Xiu argues that if a person’s life is directed by how well or poorly they nourish life, one would expect famous sages such as Yao 堯, Shun 舜, Yu 禹, Tang 湯, Wen 文, Wu 武, Zhou 周, and Confucius 孔 to easily master the art of longevity, but that was not the case.[67] Of the aforementioned, the youngest died at age seventy while the oldest lived to one hundred years. What are we to make of this fact, Xiang Xiu asks? Do we dare question their adherence to the principle of guiding nourishment? Apparently not for, in hindsight, it would appear that the fate bestowed on things by heaven has its limit and cannot be extended.

Section 7

Additionally, what life takes as joyful is treating others with kindness and fondness. Heavenly principle and human relations give us comfort and amiably amuse the heart-mind while prosperity and eminence please the will. We eat rich flavors to drain the five feelings and give sound and color the role of fulfilling our personality. This naturalness of heavenly principle is appropriate for humans and so the three kings did not change it. Now if we discard the paths of the sage and rely on parcel planting, take leave of our loved ones and abandon what makes us happy, we will treat ourselves with a bitter heart-mind, one that desires to accumulate the dust and dew of the world hoping they become mountains and oceans. Such success, I am afraid, lies in what is beyond life and cannot actually be hoped for. Even though one diligently seeks it, little will be achieved. To look at a person’s silhouette and sit like a corpse, with rocks and trees as your neighbor, this is called not being sick yet applying moxibustion to oneself. Silencing oneself without being sad, eating coarse food while not in mourning, imprisoning

oneself without committing any crime, when one chases what is empty and prays for good luck, the achievements do not match the effort. To nourish life in this manner is not an appropriate way I have heard of. Thus, Xiangru said: If a person must be like this to live a long life and avoid death, although one may surpass ten thousand generations, one would find no delight in doing so. His meaning was that such things run counter to our feelings and cause us to lose our nature for they are not rooted in heavenly principle. If one seems unhappy with a long life, how much more so will they be when their life is short? If you have clear evidence for this, we can continue our discussion.

Knowing that heavenly fate is unalterable, Xiang Xiu begins his concluding remarks by saying that kindness and fondness for others is what makes life joyful. This is a natural reaction, one the *Huainanzi* framed as follows: "When something is done for a purpose, kindness does not enter into it."[68] In addition to the relations formed when kindness and fondness for others is established, heavenly principle both comforts and amuses the heart-mind while glory and eminence please the will. When such contentment takes hold of us, richly flavored food satiates the five feelings and sound and color realize our personality. In the words of the *Liezi*: "Our five passions, our likes and dislikes, are the same now as they were of old."[69] From the time of the three kings, heavenly principle has served the needs of humanity and so they did not alter it.

If we follow Ji Kang's advice, Xiang Xiu writes, and abandon the ways of the sage, we will not only cast aside all that gives us joy, but induce bitterness into our heart-mind such that we hope to turn the insignificant (i.e., dust and dew) into the significant (i.e., mountains and oceans). Making the heart-mind of people bitter was one of the accomplishments of the tyrant Jie 桀, of whom the *Zhuangzi* writes: "When the tyrant Jie governed the world, he made the world weary and vexed; men found bitterness in their nature, and there was no contentment anywhere."[70] What Xiang Xiu is describing is neither the way of the sage nor the tyrant but the selfish person: "Therefore the superior man lives quietly and calmly, waiting for the appointments (of heaven); while the mean man does what is full of risk, looking out for the lucky turns of luck."[71] This is why Xiang Xiu states that the way put forth by Ji Kang lies outside the world of the living and is unattainable. Even if a person were to attempt to do so by staring at their silhouette while sitting like a corpse, this is informally known as "not being sick yet applying moxibustion to oneself" (*bubing er zijiu* 不病而自灸).[72]

Taking these measures further, to silence oneself without being sad, eat coarse food while not in mourning, imprison oneself without committing any crime, points to an individual that is chasing what is empty and whose goal of longevity will not be fulfilled. To emphasize this point, Xiang Xiu quotes from a rhapsody by Sima Xiangru 司馬相如:[73] "If a person must be like this to live a long life and not die, although

one may surpass ten thousand generations, one would find no delight in doing so." The idea of losing one's inborn nature due to the injuring of virtue was also mentioned in the *Zhuangzi*:

> The ruler, in his efforts to rectify, will draw a cloud over his own virtue, and his virtue will no longer extend to all things. And should he try to force it to extend, then things would invariably lose their inborn nature.[74]

Given such unhappiness with longevity, one can expect even more when said person's life is short, and it is on this note that Xiang Xiu concludes his essay.

Reply to the Rebuttal of On Nourishing Life
答難養生論

by Ji Kang

Section 1

My reply is this: As for why intelligence is treasured and action valued, it is because they can benefit life and deepen a person's self. However, if desire becomes active, regret and remorse are born; when intelligence is put into motion, anticipation establishes its position. When anticipation has its position, the will is exposed; when things are pursued and regret and remorse are born, worry accumulates and the body is threatened. Regarding these two, one will either be hidden within or connected to you externally. They are only sufficient for bringing calamity upon oneself and are not sufficient for enhancing life. Although fondness and passions emerge from human beings, they are not the proper way of the Dao. Just as trees have grubs, though they might be born due to the tree, they are not suitable to it. Thus, when grubs flourish the wood rots, and when desires are victorious the body withers. Given this, desires and life cannot co-exist for long, as is the case for fame and the body. This is roughly knowable to all.

Ji Kang commences his reply to Xiang Xiu's rebuttal by drawing an analogy between intelligence and action with a tree and the grubs feeding upon it.[75] The former benefits life and deepens understanding of the self, whereas the grubs harm the life of the tree. We can read this analogy as one wherein the heart-mind is akin to the tree and the grubs symbolize the heart-mind's action. Intelligence can dwell in the heart-mind but it should not be readily called upon unless the situation requires it. To do otherwise is to activate desire and when desire arises, regret and remorse are born. Thus, to employ intelligence is to establish the position of anticipation (*qianshi* 前識) in the heart-mind, an outcome that will inevitably harm the body. From the *Daodejing* we see

that "foresight consists of the flower of the Dao and is thus the origin of duplicity. This is why the really great man involves himself with its substance and not with its superficial aspects."[76] Additionally, the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 states: "To act before affairs take place and move before principles are clear, is called foreknowledge. The foreknower makes arbitrary guesses with no special cause."[77]

What the above reveals is that anticipation, once established, exposes the will to the possibility of the one hundred diseases taking hold, and should a person's will pursue what it desires, regret and remorse arise resulting in an accumulation of anxiety that threatens the integrity of their body. Just as grubs eat away at the tree unseen, anticipation and desire eat away at the heart-mind. Neither of these are suitable for enhancing life; on the contrary, they bring disaster upon it. Knowing when to employ intelligence and when to preserve its empty stillness is hence critical to following the "proper way of the Dao" (*dao zhi zheng* 道之正). In this way, trees have their grubs just as humans have their desires, and while grubs receive life because of trees, they are not proper to the tree's way of life. Such being the case, whenever grubs flourish, the well-being of the tree declines; whenever desire overcomes resistance of the will, the vitality of the body shrinks. Thus, if one longs for an extended life, desires must be tamped-out. This, Ji Kang declares, is obvious to everyone, so why are people not heeding such knowledge?

And yet, the world has not recognized this and takes following desire as equal to obtaining life. Despite having rich feelings for life, people do not recognize the principle for creating life and so they move towards the territory of death. It was based on this that the ancients knew that wine and meat were sweet poisons and so they viewed them as things to be rejected. They also recognized that fame and position were but fragrant enticements and so they passed them over without looking back. They made their actions just enough to benefit life and not overflow into things, and made knowledge stop at their bodies without seeking it in external things. Turning their backs on all that was harmful, they turned instead to what was beneficial. This is the way of using wisdom to comply with the Dao of life. Thus, wisdom is beautiful and the beautiful increases life without coveting it; life is precious and the precious finds joy in harmony without getting intermixed with it. How can we hate wisdom and treat the body lightly, being attentive to desire yet seeing life as humble?

To answer the question raised above, it is because the world sees following desires as the path to securing life. Why does Ji Kang frame the issue in this way? This passage from the *Lüshi Chunqiu* offers us a clue: "As a general principle, the prolongation of life results from one's following its natural course and what causes one not to follow the natural course of life is desire."[78] In other words, people might be passionate about life, but all that they do takes them closer to death and away from

the principle of life. This would appear to be a commonplace attitude, as the *Daodejing* notes: "Three out of ten are adherents of life; three out of ten are adherents of death; and there are three out of ten whose way of life also leads them to death."[79] On the last aspect mentioned by Laozi, we see it reflected by Ji Kang when he announces that the ancients were aware of the sweet poisons (*ganzhen* 甘鴆) that are wine and meat and so they rejected them.

The ancient sages also knew that fame and position were little more than fragrant enticements (*xianger* 香餌) and so they passed them over. The actions that they did endorse were designed to benefit life without being excessive, and they could be so because their knowledge came from within and not from the things external to them. In this way, the harmful was abandoned while the beneficial was embraced. This, Ji Kang says, is the art of using wisdom to accord with the Dao of life. Wisdom of the Dao hence increases life without coveting it, for the Dao creates and nourishes all things without possessing or injuring them. As the *Zhuangzi* rightly points out, "[the sage] just lets things be the way they are and does not try to help life along."[80] The mistake that Xiang Xiu and others like him make is that he favors desire over life and treats the body lightly because of his dislike for the wisdom needed to grasp the principle of nourishing life.

Section 2

Furthermore, the sage treasures his position and takes riches and honor to be sublime. This is to say the ruler of humanity has the position of son of heaven and his wealth covers the four seas. The common people cannot exist without a master and the master cannot have his position without reverence. Thus, the master reveres the position of ruler for the sake of everyone in the world and does not give himself the importance of riches and honor. You also said: Riches and honor are what people all desire, but this was due to the ending of an era when poverty and humbleness were disliked and riches and honor were liked. Such persons were unable to put aside prosperity and eminence and find peace in poverty and humbleness. Furthermore, they were required to follow his [Confucius] way and not contend with him. Unable to make them use their strength to contend with him, he [Confucius] allowed them to use their heart-mind to do so. Since men of mediocre merit could not be acquired, he thus went along with their wild and impulsive ways. This is to discuss the vulgar. He did not say that the ultimate person would covet riches and honor.

Chasing desire while neglecting the body is not a stance taken by the sage. Indeed, the sage treasures his position *qua* sage and holds the wealth and status of the Dao to be sublime. While the sage holds a position of an altogether different level, he nevertheless recognizes that the ruler of men is the son of heaven (*tianzi* 天子) and his wealth (i.e., the bounty of heaven) includes all within the four seas. In order to prolong his life

and abide by the natural harmony of the world, the sage forgoes material wealth and social status. At this point, Ji Kang repeats a line cited by Xiang Xiu—wealth and status are what all people desire—which is extracted from this passage of the *Lunyu*:

> Wealth and social eminence are things that all people desire, and yet unless they are acquired in the proper way I will not abide them. Poverty and disgrace are things that all people hate, and yet unless they are avoided in the proper way I will not despise them.[81]

Ji Kang, however, belittles the words of Confucius by saying they were spoken at a time when poverty and humbleness were loathed and wealth and status were revered.

Confucius, says Ji Kang, could not rid himself of prosperity and eminence (*ronghua* 榮華) and take comfort in poverty and humbleness (*pinjian* 貧賤). Confucius also forced his disciples to conform to his ways and not question them, but should they disagree, they were to use their heart-mind and not their body. Contending with the heart-mind (*xinjing* 心競) was also a tactic used by the sage-king Shun, at least according to the *Zhuangzi*: "Shun ruled the world by making the hearts of the people rivalrous."[82] Such being the case, and given Confucius was unable to find disciples of sufficient merit, he put up with those who were wild and impulsive, as he himself says in the *Lunyu*:

> If you cannot manage to find a person of perfectly balanced conduct to associate with, I suppose you must settle for the wild or the fastidious. In their pursuit of the Way, the wild plunge right in, while the fastidious are always careful not to get their hands dirty.[83]

What Confucius' words indicate is merely the vulgarity of human nature; they do not indicate that the ultimate person (*zhiren* 至人) covets wealth and position over nourishing life.

The sage faces the world only when he has no choice, taking the myriad things as his heart-mind, letting be their collective lives, and guiding himself with the Dao so as to conjoin with the world in self-attainment. Contemplative and taking no matters as his business, he composes himself and makes the world his domain. Although he finds himself in the position of ruler and must host the myriad states, he is tranquil like a plain officer receiving guests. Although he erects the dragon banner and wears the embroidered robes of the king, he views them as if they were the linen clothes of a commoner. Thus, rulers and ministers forget one another above, and the people and their families are satisfied below. How can the sage be said to advise everyone to revere him, divide the world out of selfishness, take riches and honor as sublime, and have a heart-mind that desires them?

Finding the state of the world to be in dire straits, the sage appears and takes the heart-mind of the myriad things as his own.[84] In the words of the *Daodejing*: "The sage has no constant heart-mind but takes the heart-mind of the common folk as his heart-mind."[85] What is more, he leaves the myriad things to their own devices and allows himself to be guided by the oneness of the Dao, as the *Zhuangzi* states: "I have heard of letting the world be, of leaving it alone; I have never heard of governing the world."[86] He appropriates no tasks as his own and makes no claims to the business of others, allowing him to compose his heart-mind and see the collectivity of the world in its entirety. For the *Daodejing*, this requires "one who takes all under heaven as his charge always tends to matters without deliberation."[87] In the time of the *Huainanzi*, however, it means: "What I call possessing the entire world is certainly not this. It is simply realizing it [the Dao] yourself. Once I am able to realize it [the Dao], the entire world will also be able to realize me."[88] Given the sage-king affords himself no preferential treatment, ministers and commoners alike forget he is their ruler and so forget one another in the process. This is what the *Zhuangzi* meant when it wrote: "Men forget one another in the arts of the Dao."[89] How, then, can people like Confucius claim the sage cherishes being revered, that he selfishly divides the world, or that wealth and position are his goals in life?

Furthermore, Ziwen was promoted three times but he showed no sign of joy; Liu Hui was dismissed three times but he showed no sign of sadness. Why? The respect of a minister is not like the status of having virtue and being righteous. The disgrace of three dismissals does not harm the beauty of humble purity. Both men, having found riches and honor in their bodies, never allowed the titles given to them by others to encircle their heart-mind. Thus, they saw glory and disgrace as being equal. To speak from here, how can you say desire for riches and honor are human feelings?

The cases of Ziwen 子文[90] and Liu Hui 柳惠[91] are illustrative of the importance of virtue and righteousness over fame and wealth, at least for the Confucians. As the *Mengzi* says:

> There is the nobility of heaven and the nobility of man. Benevolence, rightness, loyalty, and truthfulness—and taking pleasure in doing good, without ever wearying of it—this is the nobility of heaven. The ranks of duke, minister, or high official—this is the nobility of man.[92]

So long as men can prevent anxiety from taking hold of their heart-mind, thereby blocking the one hundred diseases from arising, the purity of harmonizing with natural principle is sufficient for prolonging life. In other words, equalizing glory and disgrace negates the desire for wealth and position, and having done this, one can freely partake in the joy of life.

Section 3

I would like to ask why your brocaded jackets and embroidered skirts are not exhibited in a dark room, and why you need to look back at everyone and act as if blame and praise were akin to joy and sadness? Being so, you will suffer from the desire of getting it, and having got it, you will fear losing it. And if he is concerned about hanging onto it, there are no extremes to which he will not go. How will superiors not become proud? How will they keep the fullness of things such that they do not overflow? If they seek it, how can they obtain it without being careless? If they obtained it, how will they not lose it? Furthermore, if the words spoken by the gentleman are about goodness, even those from more than one thousand li away will respond with approval to him. When facing the masses, how can he long for lofty status? Respecting the law and according with principle, not being hindered by the nets of the world, he commits no wrongs and reveres himself, taking comfort in not being an official. His heart-mind wanders in morality and justice, and so he rests in his modest residence. He does not contend with this tranquil pleasantness and so his spirit and breath move smoothly. How is it one must have prosperity and eminence before being honored?

Referring to Xiang Xiu's remark in Section 3 of his essay that "riches and honor are what people all desire," Ji Kang here asks him why, if he is unwilling to display his brocaded jackets (*jinyi* 錦衣) and embroidered skirts (*xiuchang* 繡裳), does he care what people think of him? Having the riches and honor that allow this entitlement, Xiang Xiu will not only fret about acquiring these clothes, he will fear losing them. The line that Ji Kang quotes—"if he is concerned about hanging onto it, there are no extremes to which he will not go"—comes from the *Lunyu*:

> Before such a [common] person has obtained an official position, all that concerns him is getting one; once he has gotten one, all that concerns him is hanging onto it. And if he is concerned about hanging onto it, there are no extremes to which he will not go.[93]

As for the superior person, the issue is how they can prevent the fullness of things from spilling over into depravity? How can they secure such fullness without being careless or lose it due to neglect or injury? The answer, Ji Kang indicates, lies in the goodness of the gentleman; that it is knowable one thousand *li* away was an idea first formulated in the *Yijing*:

> The noble man might stay in his chambers, but if the words he speaks are about goodness, even those from more than a thousand *li* away will respond with approval to him, and how much the more will those who are nearby do so.[94]

The gentleman is able to hold onto fullness and not lose it because he shuns lofty status, respects the law, accords with principle, is not hindered by the trappings of the world, commits no wrong, and takes comfort in not being an official. Furthermore, he allows his heart-mind to roam in morality and justice, and does not object to living a quiet yet content life. The result is that he nourishes life by having an unobstructed spirit and breath. To help elucidate what this means, we read in the *Zhuangzi* that "to lack calmness, to lack contentment, is to go against virtue."[95] Additionally, "when it [heart-mind] grates against nothing, this is the height of emptiness."[96] Finally, in the *Huainanzi* we read: "The two August Lords of high antiquity … They were peaceful and without cares and attained harmony."[97] Given the practices of the gentleman, Ji Kang asks why it is necessary to first have prosperity and eminence before one can be honored? His response is given below.

If we plow fields to make food and cultivate silkworms to make clothes, when clothes and food encircle our body, the wealth of the world becomes a bonus. It is like a thirsty person drinking from a river: he is happy when he has his fill but he does not try and covet the river's full torrent. Why must people first accumulate things before they are seen as having riches? The gentleman uses his heart-mind in this way: he takes names and position as a superfluous tumor, and resources and wealth as dirt and dust. What is his use for riches and honor? Thus, the most difficult thing in the world to obtain is not wealth and flourishing but the worry that one's thoughts will be insufficient! When a person's thoughts are sufficient, although they plow and irrigate the fields, wear coarse clothes and eat beans, how are they not self-fulfilling? If a person who is insufficient were to be nourished by the world and tasked with caring for the myriad things, they would still remain unsatisfied.

In order to discuss the principle of nourishing life, we must also understand what is necessary to satisfy its essential needs. Plowing fields to produce food and fashioning clothes out of silk help satisfy the needs of life but they do not guarantee a long life. Without the requisite knowledge of which foods benefit life and which clothes help maintain it, said things in themselves will be useless. This idea of self-satisfaction is expressed in the *Huainanzi* as entailing:

> If you do not have the wherewithal to realize it yourself, then although you take the entire world as your own family and the myriad people as your servants and concubines, you will not have what it takes to nurture life.[98]

Those who comprehend that sustaining and prolonging life is not merely about having riches and honor but quiet equanimity also comprehend that the bounty of the natural world is not theirs alone for the taking.

Repurposing the example given in the *Zhuangzi*, Ji Kang states that this attitude is akin to a thirsty person who drinks from a river to get his fill but does not lay claim to the entire body of water.[99] If the river is a source of wealth for life, why must people amass other riches beforehand? Furthermore, if the river is an openly accessible source of wealth, why do some people lay claim to it and deny others access? To quote the *Zhuangzi*: "More raw and cooked food in front of you than you can ever get through, and yet you go on endlessly hoarding goods."[100]

The gentleman, Ji Kang writes, views names and position as a superfluous tumor (*zhuiliu* 贅瘤). Of the handful of ancient texts that include the character *zhui*, the *Zhuangzi*'s appears to be the one Ji Kang had in mind: "Swelling tumors and protruding wens—these come from the body but are excretions as far as the inborn nature is concerned."[101] The *Zhuangzi* would also appear to be Ji Kang's source for the phrase "dust and dirt" (*chengou* 塵垢), which he uses to describe the gentleman's view of resources and wealth. Using these views as a guide, the gentleman has no use for riches and honor but worries his thoughts about prolonging life will be insufficient. The reason for this self-questioning is that if a person's thoughts about nourishing life are satisfactory, even though he grows his own food and makes his own clothes, he cannot be anything but self-fulfilling. In the words of the *Daodejing*, "the sage wears coarse woolen cloth but harbors jade in his bosom."[102] However, should an insufficient person be nourished by the world, as the river nourishes all who drink from it, and should he be given the throne as a result, such a person would still be unsatisfied. This is because they lack what is necessary on the inside to bring order to what lies on the outside. The *Huainanzi* elaborates:

> But if you do not have the wherewithal to realize it yourself, then although you take the entire world as your own family and the myriad people as your servants and concubines, you will not have what it takes to nurture life.[103]

A person who is satisfied does not require anything outside of themself, while a person who is unsatisfied has nothing outside of themself that is not required. If there is nothing a person does not require, there will be no place they visit where they do not lack something. If there is nothing a person requires, there will be no place they visit where they are not satisfied. A person who does not indulge their will for the sake of prosperity and eminence also does not hasten after the vulgar on account of their being unknown and poor. Such a person blends with and lives alongside the myriad things and is hence neither favored nor humiliated. This is to genuinely have riches and honor. Thus, to neglect honor yet desire honor is to end up being humble, while forgetting riches yet desiring riches is to end up being poor. This is the way of principle. If a person dwells in prosperity and eminence but is beset with worry, although they may grow old with their prosperity and eminence, these

will give them anxiety to the end of their life. Hence Laozi said: "Nothing causes greater disaster than not being content, and nothing brings about greater blame than craving something." This is his meaning.

The person who is inwardly satisfied does not need anything on the outside, while the person who is unsatisfied on the outside lacks nothing on the inside. What is more, if a person does not require anything, no matter where they go, they will be satisfied. Conversely, if a person requires everything, no matter where they go, they will be unsatisfied. In this way, the sage does not indulge his will to secure prosperity and eminence, nor does he pursue the vulgar on account of being unknown (*yin* 隱) and poor (*yue* 約), a point made earlier by the *Zhuangzi*: "Therefore carriages and caps are no excuse for becoming puffed up with pride, and hardship and poverty are no excuse for fawning on the vulgar."[104] Owing to this, the sage blends with the myriad things, living alongside them.[105] Once again, the influence of the *Zhuangzi* on Ji Kang's thinking shines through: "In this age of perfect virtue, men live the same as birds and beasts, group themselves side by side with the ten thousand things."[106] Living as such is to genuinely have riches and honor while neglecting yet desiring honor is to render oneself humble. Being humble is far worse than being poor in that it is an outcome that comes from forgetting yet desiring riches. Given these two situations, to dwell in prosperity and eminence yet be plagued with worry is to be haunted by them for the rest of one's life. Is it worth it? Ji Kang, citing the *Daodejing*, says no: "Nothing causes greater disaster than not being content, and nothing brings about greater blame than craving something."[107]

Section 4

You said in your rebuttal: When a man is moved, he thinks of the bedroom; when a man is hungry, he looks for food. This is natural principle. These words are so true! I am not asking such men go without their use of the bedroom and food; rather, their desire for the bedroom and food must accord with principle. To desire things without any concern is the action of human nature; to recognize things and be moved by them is the role of wisdom. If the action of human nature matches the things encountered in a way that is satisfactory, there will be no surplus. The man who uses wisdom seeks what arises after being moved, and although he might grow weary of such seeking, he cannot stop. Thus, the cause of suffering and calamity in the world lies with the constant use of wisdom, not the actions of human nature.

This part of Ji Kang's reply begins by referring to Section 5 of Xiang Xiu's essay: "When a man is moved, he thinks of the bedroom; when a man is hungry, he looks for food. This is natural principle." Agreeing with Xiang Xiu, Ji Kang states his argument is not about prohibiting people

from having romantic excursions or enjoying food but that they should do so according to natural principle (*ziran zhi li* 自然之理). Following said principle does not entail wantonly desiring things, the domain of human nature. The purposeful acting of human nature is a topic of discussion stretching back to the beginning of Chinese civilization. The *Liji* describes this behavior as such: "It belongs to the nature of man, as from heaven, to be still at his birth. His activity shows itself as he is acted on by external things, and develops the desires incident to his nature."[108] Not too long afterwards, the *Zhuangzi* wrote: "The inborn nature in motion is called action. Action that has become artificial is called loss."[109] When human nature is moved to action, Ji Kang says, and such acting conforms to the thing stimulating it, the outcome will be a naturally satisfactory one. However, if people rely on wisdom to uncover the reasons behind the product of their action, this behavior is artificial and the source of suffering and calamity in the world. The key to nourishing life, therefore, is to avoid employing wisdom and simply follow natural principle.

If a blind man is told to meet a woman, he will feel the same as if she were Xishi or Momu. If a muddle-headed person forgets about flavor, he will find distillers' grain and refined rice equally tasty. Why must a person recognize the difference between worthy and foolish, and beautiful and ugly, when their heart-mind is thrown into chaos with love and hate? The sage recognizes wisdom lacks constancy and harms life, and that desire chases after things and injures human nature. Thus, whenever wisdom is used, the sage gathers it in with tranquility; whenever his nature acts, he inspects it with harmony. He forces wisdom to stop at tranquility and his nature to be satisfied with harmony. From here, his spirit is purified by quietude, his body is completed by harmony, he expels burdens and eliminates harm, and is hence reborn. This is what is called not seeing desirable things and sparing the heart-mind from disorder. If indulging in rich flavors infects a person's mouth, and sound and color opens a person's heart-mind, ultimate principle can banish them and many calculations can defeat them. How can I explain this?

To the blind, beauty and ugliness are irrelevant standards, just as the five flavors are meaningless to the person who is unaware of the various tastes of food. If these natural occurrences have no bearing upon how a person nourishes their life, why should everyone else be forced to accept a distinction between worthy and foolish, beautiful and ugly, based upon whether their heart-mind loves one and hates the other? Dividing things in such a manner is to go against the natural harmony of the Dao, which is why the sage acknowledges the inconstancy of wisdom as being harmful to life whereas pursuing things to satiate our desires injures our nature. Thus, whenever the sage is tempted to use wisdom, he gathers it in with tranquility. Using harmony to keep his nature intact, the sage oversees his wisdom with tranquility, and both proceed unperturbed by things external to him.

Not stopping here, the sage elevates his existence above the common people by cleansing his spirit with quietude such that his spirit and body conjoin with the myriad things in harmonious oneness. What emerges from these steps is the elimination of accumulation and its entanglements, hence the sage is born anew (*gengsheng* 更生). Regarding the sage's rebirth, we read in the *Zhuangzi* how in "being upright and calm, he can be born again with others."[110] We find a more straightforward explanation in the *Huainanzi*: "Yet if you eschew the dust [of daily living] and relinquish attachments, you will be as calm as if you had never left your ancestor and thereupon will become grandly pervasive."[111]

As pertinent as these textual sources are, Ji Kang is content to quote the *Daodejing* for validation: "If you do not see desirable things, you will spare the heart-mind from disorder."[112] In terms of flavors infecting the mouth and sounds and colors opening the heart-mind, we find something very similar in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*:

> It is the essential nature of the ear to desire sounds … It is essential nature of the eye to desire colors … It is the essential nature of the nose to desire perfumed fragrances … It is the essential nature of the mouth to desire rich flavors.[113]

Should any of our sensory desires get the better of us, we can use ultimate principle (*zhili* 至理) to banish them from our heart-mind. According to the *Liezi*, "equalizing the give and the pull is the ultimate principle of dealing with the world."[114] What is meant by this grand equalizer? The *Zhuangzi* explains: "Beginning and end are part of a single ring, and no one can comprehend its principle. This is called heaven the equalizer, which is the same as the heavenly equality."[115] In other words, the nature of the Dao is to equalize things, and as Dao acts in a manner wholly natural to itself, the ways of the Dao come together as the ultimate principle of life.

A person who desires to be an official does not first acknowledge the ruler's position, while the person who thinks of the bedroom does not first consult his family and relatives. Why? Knowing a thing is unobtainable, we do not give birth to it in our heart-mind. Thus, those who are fond of wine suppress themselves when the wine is poisonous, and those who covet food endure hunger when the meat is spoiled. They know the principle of auspicious and inauspicious fate and thus turn their backs on them without confusion, rejecting them without any doubts. How is it they regret not being able to drink one's fill or eat a big mouthful? Furthermore, amongst the concubines at a hotel, the ugly one knows herself to be ugly and so is treasured, while the beautiful one knows herself to be beautiful and so is humble. The form of beauty and ugliness lies with the eyes, but to see one as worth treasuring and the other as humble is not the same. One must first have feelings of right and wrong and then beauty and ugliness are fixed in place. To speak of

principle as satisfying what is on the inside, and we employ it to manage what is on the outside, how can things remain hidden?

Before he discusses why the ultimate principle of life requires harmonizing human nature and breath, Ji Kang here offers a short interlude by way of moderating our desires. He presents two examples: the person seeking political office and the person seeking physical pleasure. In both cases, the involved behavior carries a risk, perhaps even physical injury. How a person goes about acquiring these two goals depends upon their definition of right and wrong. Knowing a thing is unobtainable, it is wrong to let said thing take hold of our heart-mind where it will establish the roots of illness. The wine connoisseur knows not to drink what has become poisonous, just as the starving person knows not to eat meat that is rancid. When it comes to life, therefore, those who are earnest in nourishing it avoid what can harm it, while those who give life no thought recklessly do as they please without regard for the consequences. In this way, nourishing life has its elements of beauty and ugliness, right and wrong.

Indulging too much in the beauty of life can prove disastrous. More fundamentally, however, Ji Kang is questioning the very use of beauty and ugliness as yardsticks for success and failure. Referencing the famous story in the *Zhuangzi* of Yangzi 陽子 and two concubines at a local inn,[116] Ji Kang's argument is that beauty and ugliness are subjective judgments of the eye; they do not, in and of themselves, point to a thing's worth or worthlessness. These, he says, only arise after our feelings of right and wrong are established. To use the right and wrong of our eyes to oversee the principle of life is bound to fail. Instead, we must allow principle to satisfy what is within us (i.e., human nature, spirit, the heart-mind) before turning our attention to what lies outside of us. If we can manage this, nothing will remain hidden from our view.

To speak from here, if nature and breath become harmonized, nothing will be stuck in an idle space; when feelings and the will become calm, nothing will stagnate due to their inability to pass through [the idle space]. The many burdens of the world come from not seeing things clearly. As for the feelings of ordinary people, when things are afar, no one ignores them even though they are large; when things are nearby, no one preserves them even though they are small. Why do they do this? It is actually due to the far and near being independent of one another, and that what people recognize and see produce different feelings. That one should not be with their wife or concubine during the three-year mourning period is because the rites prohibit it. No one has violated this. Wine and beauty are hence the body's opponents and no one can discard them.

Continuing with his interlude, Ji Kang remains adamant that people's failure to live a long and healthy life stems from incorrectly viewing right

and wrong and the hidden impact of doing so. Referring to remarks made by Xiang Xiu in Section 5 of his essay—that a person's nature and breath "will be stuck in an idle space" and that their feelings and will "stagnate due to their inability to pass through it"—Ji Kang's response is this: if nature and breath harmonize themselves, they will have nothing to get stuck on; if feelings and the will calm themselves, they will not be in a position where stagnation is possible. Thus, the burdens of life arise from not seeing things clearly. A case in point are the feelings of the common people: things in the distance, even large ones, plague their thoughts while those things around them, small as they are, are paid no heed. This is why the common people have unremarkable lifespans whereas the sage observes what is intimate so as to understand what is remote, and so lives a very long life.

To speak from here, what the rites prohibit are nearby and although small, they are not violated; opponents of the body are distant and although large, they are not discarded. However, if a person could seize a map of the world with their left hand and harm their body with their right, even a fool would not do this. What this illustrates is that the world is treated more lightly than the body. That wine and beauty are treated even more lightly than the world is also knowable. Moreover, the people of the world sacrifice their lives and die without remorse for these, which is to overlook the important while treating the light as essential. How is this not turning one's back on the distant to chase after the nearby? The person with wisdom is not like this. He examines the light and important and then acts, weighing gain and loss to establish his position. Since near and distant have the same principle, he prepares for the distant as if it were near, is cautious with the hidden as if it were visible, and walks alone through the gateway of all subtleties in order to be without fear from start to end. Between this person and the one who indulges their desires and pleases their heart-mind, what a difference!

Wrapping up his interlude, Ji Kang belittles the attention given to the *Liji* and its behavioral restrictions on matters close at hand because, as he said earlier, human relations are beneficial but must be moderated using natural principle. What is more, wine and beauty may bring short-term benefits but their long-term effects are very unhealthy. Put differently, the *Liji* instructs people on the proper ways to act for short periods of time but lacks discussion of the harmful effects these limitations pose on people's emotional and physical well-being. Similarly, drinking and physical pleasure enlighten one's mood but the more we depend on them to achieve this end, the more we will be unable to escape their hold over us.

Ji Kang employs an interesting analogy to demonstrate the effects these have: holding a map of the world in one hand while the other simultaneously attacks the body. Not even a fool would volunteer to be in

such a position. It should be noted that Ji Kang was not the originator of this analogy—that honor goes to the *Huainanzi*:

> Honor, position, riches, and profit are what people covet. But tell someone to hold in his left hand a writ for the empire and with his right hand to cut his own throat, and not even a fool would take the latter. From this perspective, life is more valuable than empire.[117]

The point being made is this: given the choice between the world and one's body, most people would choose the former, a fact first observed in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*: "The world is less important than one's body, yet a scholar-knight is willing to use his body for the sake of another man."[118] If people so readily give their lives to save the world, how much more will they sacrifice it for wine and beauty?

Indeed, people happily die for such gratification. How is this not, Ji Kang asks, a case of turning one's back on what is distant to pursue what is near? The sage, however, lives differently. He does not act impulsively but carefully examines the significance of a thing before deciding upon a course of action. Weighing the benefit and harm to his own spiritual and bodily harmony is how the *Huainanzi* describes the uniqueness of the sage: "The sage respects the small and is cautious of the subtle; in action he does not lose a moment."[119] Recalling the *Zhuangzi* passage quoted earlier—beginning and end are part of a single ring—we can also say near and far partake in this principle of circularity, such that preparing for one is to also prepare for the other; the same holds true for the visible and hidden. In this way, the sage solitarily enters the "gateway of all subtleties," an expression derived from the opening chapter of the *Daodejing*: "The mystery upon mystery and gateway of all subtleties."[120] The difference between the sage and a person who indulges their desires and pleases their heart-mind could not be more pronounced!

Section 5

You said in your rebuttal: The sage who plumbs principle and exhausts his nature should enjoy a long life, yet amongst Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Zhou, and Confucius, the oldest reached one hundred years and the youngest just seventy. Is this to say they neglected [the principle of] guiding nourishment? In my discussion, although Yao and Confucius reported that fate is limited, they guided and nourished themselves in order to exhaust their lifespan. This was the result of their exposing principle and their only reaching one hundred years of age was not because they failed to nourish life. Furthermore, Confucius exposed the principle of and exhausted his nature to reach seventy, yet farmers, due to six harms, are foolish and stupid but there are those among them who live to one hundred and twenty. If the ultimate marvelousness of

Confucius can rely on the ultimate clumsiness of farmers, why is the theory of living one thousand years so strange?

With this section of his essay, Ji Kang returns to the central theme of nourishing life in order to prolong it. Recounting Xiang Xiu's comment in Section 6 of his essay that amongst the great sages of antiquity, their ages ranged from seventy years to one hundred, in Ji Kang's mind, these sages died too young. Yao and Confucius understood the principle of life cultivation and guided themselves so as to maximize its potential, but their efforts only resulted in a lifespan of ordinary length. Given that some farmers surpassed one years of age, the seventy years of Confucius falls short of the target. What makes Confucius' lifespan so disappointing is that farmers are saddled with the so-called six harms (*liu bi* 六弊), rendering them intellectually incapable of grasping any principle pertaining to self-cultivation. The six faults, according to Confucius, are comprised of: foolishness (*yu* 愚), deviance (*dang* 蕩), harmful rigidity (*zei* 賊), intolerance (*jiao* 絞), unruliness (*luan* 亂), and willfulness (*kuang* 狂)."[121] The *Zhuangzi* is another text that touches upon the shortcomings of people, but instead of limiting them to six, the text says there are eight flaws (*ba ci* 八疵) and four perils (*si huan* 四患). The eight flaws are: officiousness (*ning* 佞), obsequiousness (*chan* 諂), sycophancy (*yu* 諛), flattery (*chan* 讒), calumny (*zei* 賊), maliciousness (*te* 慝), wickedness (*shi* 適), treachery (*xian* 險); the four perils include: avidity (*tao* 叨), avarice (*tan* 貪), obstinacy (*hen* 很), bigotry (*jin* 矜).[122] Had Confucius, with all his wisdom, adopted the life-knowledge of the farmers, a potential lifespan of one thousand years would not sound so strange after all.

Furthermore, of all the sages that lived, some injured themselves for the benefit of the world, expressing their actions and displaying their successes to make the world admire them, and though they relocated three times, each place became a city. Others ate poor food and diligently bent their bodies operating the four quarters. They labored their heart-mind and wore-out their form, hastily losing all decorum. Others used schemes of surprise and secret encounters which lead to armed conflict. They killed and cut down powerful soldiers, fighting and striving for success and profit. Others cultivated their bodies to illuminate the dirty and displayed their wisdom to shock the stupid. Standing upon their fame, they surpassed their entire age and were taken by the world as the standard. They were also attentive in teaching and good in guiding, assembling three thousand disciples. Their mouths were tired-out by all the discussion and debate, their bodies exhausted and bent over like musical stones, their form was as if they were trying to save their youth, and they looked as if they were managing everything within the four seas. Thus, their spirit was caught between the extremes of profit and harm, while their heart-mind galloped on the road of glory and dishonor. In the time it takes a person to look up and down, they had already twice surpassed the boundary of space.

Continuing his discussion on why some of the most famous sages in history did not attain the longevity Ji Kang says is possible, the reasons are as follows: First, some of these sages injured themselves while securing benefits for the world. In the *Zhuangzi*, we are told that "Shun must have done rank deeds for the hundred clans to have delighted in him so."[123] Second, the actions and successes of some sages were publicly discussed so that the world would profoundly admire and seek them out for advice. The *Huainanzi* speaks of Yu in such terms: "When Yu was chasing the right moment, if he lost his sandal, he would not stop to pick it up. If he snagged his cap on a branch, he would not even glance back at it."[124] Third, some sages were poor and malnourished, laboring their heart-mind and exhausting their bodies for the sake of the world.

When it comes to sages who used schemes of surprise and secret encounters, we can cite a story in the *Guanzi* on how Tang defeated Jie to found the Shang dynasty:

> Nühua was a person Jie loved so Tang bribed her with a thousand catties of gold. Quni was a person Jie liked so Tang bribed him with a thousand catties of gold. In his inner chambers then there was the Yin of Nühua; in his outer court there was the Yang of Quni. The combination of persuasive arguments from both the Yin and the Yang enabled Tang to become son of heaven. Such was Tang's secret plan."[125]

Whereas sages such as Tang were forced to engage in physical conflict, others took a more removed approach to resolving problems, specifically cultivating their bodies and displaying their wisdom. Confucius is an example of this and Ji Kang quotes the text of the *Zhuangzi* as evidence:

> Confucius was besieged between Chen and Cai, and for seven days he ate no cooked food … you show off your wisdom in order to astound the ignorant, work at your good conduct in order to distinguish yourself from the disreputable, going around bright and shining as though you were carrying the sun and moon in your hand.[126]

Other sages used their fame to surpass their age and become the standard of the world. The *Lunyu* writes: "How could I dare to lay claim to either sageliness or goodness? What can be said about me is no more than this: I work at it without growing tired and encourage others without growing weary."[127] Still others paid attention to their teaching and guiding, but in doing so, they fatigued their mouths and exhausted their bodies such that they became hunched-over like musical stones. Regarding bodies shaped like musical stones, the *Zhuangzi* says: "[This] old fisherman, pole in hand, presents himself in front of you, and you double up at the waist, as bent as a chiming stone, and bow every time you reply to his words."[128] Others had forms that appeared like they were trying to "manage everything within the four seas" (*ying sihai* 營四海).

The *Zhuangzi* is the origin of this expression: "There's a man over there with a long body and short legs, his back a little humped and his ears set way back, who looks as though he were trying to attend to everything within the four seas."[129] In the end, the spirit of these sages was caught between the poles of profit and harm while their heart-mind ran down the road of glory and dishonor. Thus, in the duration needed to raise and lower one's head, these sages had twice surpassed the boundary of space, a notion derived from the *Zhuangzi*: "Men's minds can be forced down or boosted up … Its swiftness such that, in the time it takes to lift and lower the head, it has twice swept over the four seas and beyond."[130]

If we compare the above to those who practice inward inspection and self-reflection, the latter are fond of breath but thrifty with their essence. They have a clear understanding that covers the four quarters, yet it neither grasps nor acts. In this way, they abandon the world and sit in forgetfulness, treasuring their nature and completing the genuine. I cannot see how they are the same. Now, I am not saying the pine and cypress tree are the same as the elm and willow; when planting a pine or cypress, each must be well situated so that it can properly satisfy its nature. If you raise a pine in fertile soil, it will wither and die in the middle of its years; if you plant it on a solemn cliff, it will flourish and be lush, renewing itself day after day. This is one view of nourishing form. Duke Dou did not consume any drugs yet he lived to be one hundred and eighty years. Is this not because he played the qin to harmonize his heart-mind? This is also one aspect of nourishing the spirit.

Compared to the aforementioned sages, those who engage in introspection are caring of their breath but thrifty with their essence. The *Lunheng* speaks of Laozi as such an individual: "There is a belief that by the doctrine of Laozi one can transcend into another existence. Through quietism and dispassionateness one nourishes the vital force [*qi*], and cherishes the spirit."[131] Possessing an understanding that is pure in its clarity, it covers the four quarters of the world without grasping or acting for things. With an understanding that requires no oversight, the contemplative sage relinquishes his place in the world and sits in forgetfulness (*zuowang* 坐忘).[132] Doing so allows him to treasure his inborn nature and complete the genuine in him (i.e., the Dao). A similar statement appears in the *Huainanzi*: "Now if you keep intact your nature and guard your authenticity, and do not do damage to your person."[133]

In Section 6 of his rebuttal, Xiang Xiu spoke of the pine and cypress tree and Ji Kang returns to them here, comparing them to the elm and willow. The pine and cypress require environments appropriate to the unique characteristics of their nature; planting one in fertile soil will see it die prematurely, but if it is planted on a cliffside it will flourish. The pine and cypress are thus used by Ji Kang as metaphors for nourishing life. To indulge in rich food and engage in sexual relations, to overuse one's

heart-mind and wear out one's body, these are the kinds of fertile soil that will poison the essence of life and disperse the spirit. What the body needs is avoidance of over-indulgence so that it can refine and strengthen the nourishing breath of the Dao. If duke Dou 竇公 can live to one hundred and eighty years without taking drugs,[134] is it not possible, Ji Kang asks, he did so because he played the *qin* to harmonize his heart-mind?

Silkworms that are heated will mature in eighteen days but if they are kept cool, they will take more than thirty days. If one nourishes the fate that cannot be exceeded, things can prosper more than twice as long. Things that are warm and fat die early, while those that are cool and thin postpone their decline. This can definitely be recognized. Stabled horses that are nurtured but not ridden can be kept for sixty years. Bodies that are exhausted have a rapid decline while those whose form is complete are difficult to kill. Again, this can be known. Riches and honor lead to many injuries while the things that attack you are numerous. Wild people live to a great age and the things that harm them are few. This can also be seen. If we can use our eyes to see what the blind achieve, and our mouths to taste what the muddleheaded taste, keeping the things that harm life at a distance while managing those that benefit our nature, then we can start to discuss nourishing life.

Ending this section of his reply, Ji Kang once again employs nature-based metaphors to illustrate the principle of nourishing life. The first is the silkworm (*can* 蠶). Noting how silkworms in a hot environment reach maturity in eighteen days, Ji Kang then says if they are placed in a cool one, they will take more than thirty days to mature. According to the *Huainanzi*, they will actually take thirty-two days: "The silkworm eats but does not drink. In thirty-two days it transforms."[135] From this, Ji Kang concludes that nourishing a supposedly unchangeable fate, at least according to Xiang Xiu, the duration of said fate can, at the very least, be doubled. To put this into terms relatable to human life, those that are warm and fat die early while the cool and thin live longer. Stabled horses (*yuma* 圉馬) are the second metaphor used by Ji Kang. Horses that are cared for in their stables and not ridden can live for sixty years. In human terms, if we exhaust our bodies then our health will rapidly decline, but those who learn to keep their form intact will be full of vitality to the end of their days.

Looking within human society, pursuance of riches and honor will lead to many injuries, but the things outside of riches and honor waiting to attack us are also numerous. What is more, people who are relatively safe from these threats, what Ji Kang calls wild people (*yeren* 野人), or rustics, enjoy a lifespan that is far longer than those living a life of gluttony and pleasure. Thus, the lesson to be learned is this: seeing the invisible and tasting the flavorless is to keep harm at bay while managing all that benefits our nature. This is what is meant by the ultimate principle of life.

Section 6

Your rebuttal said: Shen Nong was the first to promote grains for consumption, birds and beasts use grains to fly and walk, and the common people use grains to see and breathe. I am not saying Shen Nong did not promote the five grains. Having discussed the superior drugs, he also promoted the five grains. The reason is that superior drugs are rare and scarce, making them difficult to come by even with hard work. In contrast, the five grains are easy to grow and through farming, they can be sustained for a long time. As the five grains aided the common people and continuously prevented their early death, he kept them. Yet only the worthy person sets their will on what is great while the unworthy set their will on what is small; in both cases, the will emerges in the same way. When it comes to the angelica flower's ability to stop pain, people use it without end. When it comes to ploughs and plowshares opening up and developing the land, people use them continuously without end. However, when it comes to nourishing fate, people disdain and refuse to talk about it. This, I am afraid, is to enjoy what has been previously practiced and take as strange what is unknown. Furthermore, plains and fields contain species of the date and chestnut tree, ponds and lakes contain species of the water chestnut and Gordon Euryale plant, and while they are not superior drugs, they appear to be more deeply respected than the major kinds of millet. How can we say only the five grains are tools for seeing and breathing?

This penultimate section of Ji Kang's response to Xiang Xiu opens with the former referring to the latter's point in Section 4 of his refutation that: "Shen Nong was the first to promote grains for consumption, birds and beasts use grains to fly and walk, and the common people use grains to see and breathe." Ji Kang is not denying Shen Nong's role in establishing agricultural practices in China's high antiquity; on the contrary, Ji Kang is saying Shen Nong promoted the five grains only after discovering the benefits of the superior drugs (recall that Ji Kang first mentioned these herbal remedies in Section 4 of his original essay), but due to their rarity and the inability of the common people to acquire them, planting and harvesting grains proved a valuable nutritional alternative. What is more, the five grains helped stave off premature death (*yao e* 夭閼), a phrase existing in pre-Han times in this single example from the *Zhuangzi*: "Only then can he [Peng] mount on the back of the wind, shoulder the blue sky, and nothing can hinder or block him."[136]

The problem with the superior drugs and five grains is that only the worthy person sets their will on great applications while the unworthy person (*buxiao* 不肖) sets their will on small applications; however, the ability to do great and small equally exists in all of us, as the *Lunyu* argues: "The Dao of kings Wen and Wu has not yet fallen to the ground—it still exists in people. Those who are worthy understand its greater aspects,

while those who are unworthy understand its lesser aspects."[137] A case in point, Ji Kang writes, is people's love of the angelica flower (*danggui* 當歸) and farm tools, both of which help ease the stress of life. Additionally, plains and fields (*pingyuan* 平原) contain species of the date (*zao* 棗) and chestnut (*li* 栗) tree, while ponds and lakes (*chizhao* 池沼) contain species of the water chestnut (*ling* 菱) and Gordon Euryale plant (*qian* 芡). Although they are not equivalent to the superior drugs in terms of their ability to prolong life, they are nevertheless seen with greater esteem than the various types of millet. When it comes to nourishing life, however, the common people show disdain towards the aforementioned and refuse to discuss their benefits. What bizarre logic!

You also said: When only millet is aromatic, prosperity descends and spirits are revered. Duckweed, hairhead wormwood, and water-grass, these cannot compare to luxurious meat dishes; pond and sewage water from the roadside are no match for rich, double-fermented wine. However, when offered in the ancestral temple, they moved the spirits to send down their blessings. Based on this, we know that spirits enjoy virtue and sincerity; they do not require anything to nourish life. This resembles when the heads of the nine territories reported on their duties and each offered something from his region as tribute and to verify his sincerity. You also said: When meat and grain are put into our body, within ten days our fullness will be visible. This is a natural sign of their suitability for life and they are also what besiege the body. I am not saying that cooked meat and grain does not fatten-up the body but that if one wants to prolong life, they are not as good as the superior drugs. Please allow me to use your words so that I can refute you.

Here, Ji Kang yet again quotes something Xiang Xiu said in his refutation, specifically Section 4 of his essay on the aromatic nature of millet and the reverence of spirits. Listing a variety of plant species—duckweed (*pin* 蘋), hairhead wormwood (*fan* 蘩), and water-grass (*yunzao* 蘊藻)—Ji Kang writes the common people do not prefer these over-rich meat dishes and the same holds true for stagnant water when compared to sweet wine. And yet, when the spirits receive these plain offerings in the temple, they shower people with their blessings. On this point, we can surmise that Ji Kang had this passage from the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 in mind, and chose it to counter Xiang Xiu's own reference to that text in the passage just quoted:

> If only there is exemplary good faith, then even the vegetation along creeks, brooks, ponds, and pools, such plants as duckweed, white southernwood, and bunches of algae, such vessels as square bamboo baskets, round bamboo baskets, pots, and pans, and water from lakes and puddles in the road can be offered to ghosts and spirits and presented to kings and lords.[138]

That the spirits prefer virtue and sincerity over riches and flattery is analogous to the heads of the nine territories offering their reports to the king—each pays tribute in order to reaffirm his sincerity and loyalty. The *Mengzi* explains: "The lords' visits to the son of heaven were called reports on responsibilities. *Shuzhi* means that they reported on the fulfillment of their responsibilities."[139] Finally, Ji Kang once again refers to Section 4 of Xiang Xiu's rebuttal, only this time to the consumption of meat and grain requiring up to ten days for their effects to be seen, which testifies to their suitability for life. Yet again, Ji Kang argues riches such as these besiege the body and lay the groundwork for the one hundred diseases, and once again, he reiterates that he is not against consuming cooked meat and grain, but is merely saying they are not as effective in extending one's life as the superior drugs.

What everyone knows is that wheat is better than beans and rice is superior to millet; we recognize this because of the effects they produce. Suppose there existed a land without rice and millet—it would view wheat and beans as valuable and nourishing, proclaiming nothing can surpass them. Thus, the common people not knowing the superior drugs are better than rice and millet is akin to saying beans and wheat are superior to daisies and mugwort, and that the world is devoid of rice and millet. If one can rely on drugs to make oneself eternal, then the humble status of rice and millet is easy to know. The gentleman is aware of this and takes as his standard what is suitable to the principle of his nature while utilizing the marvelous things to nourish his body. He establishes his mysterious root in the primal nine, and inhales the rosy clouds of dawn to aid his spirit. If you believe spring wine leads to longevity, then I have yet to hear of any yellow-haired elders in Gaoyang; if you believe worthiness is to be full and content, then I have yet to hear of any one hundred year old guests eating the extravagant food of the nobles. Furthermore, Mr. Ran was ill as a young child and master Yan died prematurely. Whenever there is a bumper harvest, many diseases arise; whenever there is famine, few people get sick. Thus, the Di tribe eat rice and suffer from leprosy, the wounded eat grain and their blood flows, horses feed on millet and their hooves become heavy, and wild geese eat various granules and they are left behind. To speak from this, birds and beasts are not enough to show the reward of the five grains, and the common people are not enough to show the delivery of farmland. However, people still exhaust their strength managing them and kill their bodies fighting over them.

If the superior drugs are a more effective means of prolonging life than consuming meat, grains, and wine, then amongst the latter three, the five grains are superior to meat and wine. What is more, wheat surpasses beans and rice surpasses millet. Following this line of reasoning, Ji Kang hypothesizes that if there were a land where only wheat and beans could be grown, the people there would say nothing is better for nourishing

life than wheat and beans! Relating this experience back to the superior drugs, if all the common people know are wheat and beans, how can they compare their benefits to those of daisies (*peng* 蓬) and mugwort (*hao* 蒿)?

The gentleman knows this, which is why he takes as his standard what fits his nature while making use of things able to nourish his body. He establishes his mysterious root (*xuangen* 玄根) in the primal nine (*chujiu* 初九). On the first of these, we read in the *Daodejing* that "the gate of the mysterious female is referred to as the root of heaven and earth."[140] As for *chujiu*, it is the first (i.e., lowest) line in the first hexagram (Qian 乾) of the *Yijing*. This line is explained as "a submerged dragon does not act," the meaning of which is: "One who has a dragon's virtue yet remains hidden. He neither changes to suit the world nor seeks fulfillment in fame."[141] And yet, people remain convinced that drinking wine and eating luxurious food can lead to the same length of life as the gentleman. Where, Ji Kang asks, can such people be found amongst the yellow-haired villagers or white-haired guests at court?[142]

Even those who are gifted with superior intelligence cannot escape the claws of fate. Case in point, Confucius' disciples Ran Geng 冉耕[143] and Yan Hui 顏回,[144] both of whom died prematurely. Additionally, whenever there is a healthy harvest many diseases arise, but when the harvests fail and there is famine, the number of sick people decreases dramatically. There are, paradoxically, those who show no benefit from a grain-only diet. When the Di 狄 tribe, for example, eat rice they incur leprosy (*lai* 癩). We learn of this fact, first in the *Liji*—"Those on the north were called Di. They wore skins of animals and birds, and dwelt in caves. Some of them also did not eat grain-food"[145]—and second, in the *Huainanzi*: "To the north of the Yanmen Pass, the Di tribes do not eat grain."[146] Ji Kang also shares with us the fact that wounded people who eat grain have a higher blood flow than others, horses that eat millet have bloated hooves which prevent them from running, while wild geese that eat granules of grain that make them fat and unable to fly with other birds. The conclusion Ji Kang reaches is that birds and beasts cannot reveal to humans the rewards of eating the five grains, and the farmer cannot reveal to the rest of humanity the benefits to be had in farming. Why, Ji Kang despairs, do people still exhaust themselves managing and fighting over the five grains?

When nourishing one's parents or making a presentation to the esteemed, only chrysanthemum, wild rice, and fine millet will do; for guests at parties and grand feasts, only sumptuous dishes and fine wine will do. They do not know that all of these melt their muscles and bodily fluids, spreading their destruction and speeding their decay. At first they are tasty and fragrant, but once they enter the body they become foul and rotten, exhausting and abusing the essence and spirit, and infecting and dirtying the six bowels. They also stagnate and dirty the

breath and vapor, and spontaneously give birth to boring worms. Greed and licentiousness are supported by them and the one hundred diseases rely on them. Those who taste them lose their feeling of taste, while those who eat them curtail their good luck. How are these like a flowing stream or sweet wine, jade buds and flowers of jade, gold cinnabar and stone mushrooms, the purple fungus and yellow essence? All of these contain many spiritual essences, each one issuing forth and growing peculiarly. Their pure fragrance diffuses with difficulty and their harmonious breath is filled to overflowing. They wash and wipe away the five viscera, dredging and penetrating them in order to be enlightened, and swallow them to lighten the body. They also soften a person's skeleton and ease the breath, making the bones flexible and muscles supple. Cleansing the dirt and dispelling the obscene, their will soars to the blue clouds. To go on from here, why would anyone nourish themselves with the five grains?

Noting the lack of substantive benefit from eating meat and the five grains, Ji Kang outlines how medicinal potions can extend life by boosting the potency of spirit and breath. Despite people's presumptions that chrysanthemum (*ju* 菊), wild rice (*gu* 菰), and fine millet (*liang* 梁) should be offered to those persons holding a special place in one's heart, whereas sumptuous dishes and fine wines will only suffice for guests at social events and other public gatherings. Ji Kang proclaims all of these will melt (*naoni* 淖溺) a person's muscles (*jin* 筋) and bodily fluids (*ye* 腋).[147] Although meat and grain-based dishes are tasty and fragrant at first, they become foul and rotten after entering the body. Turning poisonous, they attack and exhaust the body's essence and spirit, infecting and polluting its six *fu* 府.[148] Furthermore, they cause the body's breath and vapor to stagnate before giving birth to boring worms.[149] All of these progressions are fed by greed and licentiousness while they, in turn, feed the one hundred diseases.

How can cooked meat and the five grains compare to a flowing stream (*liuquan* 流泉) or sweet wine (*ganli* 甘醴), jade buds (*qiongrui* 瓊蘂) and flowers of jade (*yuying* 玉英), gold cinnabar (*jindan* 金丹) and stone mushrooms (*shijun* 石菌), the purple fungus (*zizhi* 紫芝) and yellow essence (*huangjing* 黃精)? As for why a person should consume these things, the *Baopuzi* has a great deal to say, however, Ji Kang would have been referring to Wang Chong's remarks on alchemy in his *Lunheng*: "One hears that the Daoists drink an elixir made of gold and gems and eat the flowers of the purple boletus. These extremely fine stuffs make their bodies light, so that they become spirits and genii."[150] The elements listed above all contain spiritual essences and their effects on the body manifest in peculiar ways.

Some of these manifestations include a fragrance not easily dispersed, a breath filled to overflowing, and five viscera that are washed and wiped away. When it comes to cleansing and purifying oneself, the *Zhuangzi*

says: "You must fast and practice austerities, cleanse and purge your mind, wash and purify your inner spirit."[151] In terms of ingesting the superior drugs, one of their most noticeable effects is lightening the body. This idea was already mentioned in the *Lunheng*: "The Daoists sometimes use medicines with a view to rendering their bodies more supple and their vital force stronger, hoping thus to prolong their years and to enter a new existence."[152] Other, less obvious effects, are making the bones flexible and muscles supple. This allows for better circulation of breath while also purifying the body's essence. In the end, if they prove successful, they will ascend to heaven. With such mesmerizing results, why would anyone choose to restrict themselves to the five grains for life nourishment?

Furthermore, when the mulberry insect has its young, the eumenid wasp carries them off; this is a change in its inborn nature. The orange seed that crosses the river becomes a hedge thorn and changes according to the transformation of land; this is a difference in form. How is it that in receiving the breath of everything a person eats, they cannot reverse their substance and change their nature? Thus, Chi Fu got red hair from distilled cinnabar, master Juan used essence of atractylodes to greatly lengthen his life, Wo Quan got square eyes from eating the seeds of a pine tree, Chi Song rode upon smoke by drinking liquid jade, Wu Guang's ears lengthened by eating cattail and leek, Qiong Shu stopped aging by consuming stalactite, Fang Hui ate mica and was able to transform into something else, and Chang Rong changed her appearance by eating thorny shrubs. Examples such as these cannot be exhaustively detailed. Who says the five grains are supreme and the superior drugs lack any benefit?

That the superior drugs are able to change a person's inborn nature is, for Ji Kang, no different from when one animal's behavior is changed because of its interaction with another like the case of the eumenid wasp (*guoluo* 果蠃) that carries off the larvae of the mulberry insect (*mingling* 螟蛉). This rather odd fact was voiced as early as the *Shijing* 詩經: "The mulberry insect has young ones, and the sphex carries them away."[153] The effects of the superior drugs also vary from person to person, much like when the seeds of an orange (*ju* 橘) are carried across a river to the opposite shore and become a hedge thorn (*zhi* 枳). The *Huainanzi* confirms this, saying: "Thus if you plant a mandarin orange tree north of the Yangzi, it will transform into an inedible orange."[154] Since things in Nature are influenced by changes in breath, how is it that humans, who are also influenced by the breath around and within them, are unable to alter their substance and inborn nature too?

The answer, Ji Kang says, is that we can alter our nature but we cannot do so without the assistance of the superior drugs. For example, Chi Fu 赤斧 ate distilled cinnabar (*liandan* 練丹) and his hair turned red; master Juan 涓子 extended his life by consuming essence of atractylodes

(*shujing* 朮精),[155] Wo Quan 偓佺 ate the seeds of the pine tree (*song* 松) and his eyes became square, Chi Song 赤松 drank liquid jade (*shuiyu* 水玉) and was able to ride on smoke, Wu Guang's 務光 ears lengthened after eating cattail (*pu* 蒲) and leek (*jiu* 韭), Qiong Shu 邛疏 consumed stalactite (*shisui* 石髓) and stopped aging, Fang Hui 方回 could change forms by eating mica (*yunmu* 雲母), and Chang Rong 昌容 could alter her looks by eating thorny shrubs (*penglei* 蓬虆).[156] Clearly, the superior drugs are not without benefit!

You again claim that since you have yet to see with your own eyes a person who has lived for one thousand years, this implies they do not exist. I must promptly ask you: If you see a person who is one thousand years old, how will you distinguish them from other people? If you wish to compare them by way of their form, there is really no difference between them; if you wish to verify them using their age, this is like the morning mushroom knowing nothing of twilight and dawn, and the mayfly lacking a way to recognize the sacred tortoise. Given this, if a person who is one thousand years old were seen in public, they would certainly not be distinguishable from the person who is few in years. If Pengzu lived to seven hundred years and An Qi to one thousand, those of limited sight would say the records are wrong. This is like Liu Gen not eating for prolonged periods, choosing to sleep instead, yet people say his ability to endure hunger was purely by chance. What is more, Zhongdu's body was warm in the winter even though he went naked, and his body stayed cool in the summer even though he wore a fur coat. Huan Tan said his ability to endure heat and cold was purely by chance. Li Shaojun recognized duke Huan's jade bowl but Mr. Ruan said he knew of it during a divination session. Yao wanted to abdicate the world to Xu You but Yang Xiong said this was created by admirers of legends. In all of the above cases, these people outwardly take the duke of Zhou and Confucius as their hinge to make their will singularly sincere, yet they are inwardly spurred on by fondness and passions, and though they want to stop they cannot. They gallop about in the world's teachings, contending skillfully between states of prosperity and humiliation. Wishing to be like everyone else, they diminish themselves, yet their thoughts do not leave their position. They limit the eccentric to all that can be seen, confining the marvelous principle of life to common discourse, and talk of penetrating change and reaching the hidden. I have yet to hear of this.

Protesting Xiang Xiu's claim that having not personally met a person who is one thousand years old, they cannot possibly exist, Ji Kang retorts Xiang Xiu by asking how he would know said person should he encounter them? Will he do so by way of their body or their age? If the former, said person will look like any other old person. If the latter, this is like comparing the morning mushroom (*zhaojun* 朝菌), which does not live to see a second day, with those things that know the cycle of

day and night. People who are like the morning mushroom are examples of what the *Zhuangzi* calls the short-lived: "The morning mushroom knows nothing of twilight and dawn; the summer cicada knows nothing of spring and autumn. They are the short-lived."[157] Young people who claim to know old life are similar to the mayfly's (*fuyou* 蜉蝣) inability to know the sacred tortoise (*linggui* 靈龜), an analogy taken from the *Huainanzi*: "The turtle lives for three thousand years, whereas the mayfly does not live more than three days. Now if you rely on the mayfly to augment the turtle's life, people will surely laugh at you."[158] In other words, anyone who reaches one thousand years would look no different from people living for one hundred.

How are these rare individuals able to achieve such extraordinary longevity without looking the part? The answer is they are born with a different breath, they comprehend the principle of nourishing life, and they avail themselves of the superior drugs. Taking issue with Xiang Xiu's theory that the lifespan of Pengzu 彭祖[159] and An Qi 安期 was erroneously recorded, Ji Kang lists other cases in which people like Xiang Xiu would doubt the accuracy of written records. Liu Gen 劉根 not eating for an extended period of time is an example, as is Wang Zhongdu 王仲都, who could modulate his body temperature regardless of the climate.[160] Li Shaojun 李少君 knowing of duke Huan's[161] jade bowl (*yuwan* 玉椀) without seeing it beforehand, and Yao 堯 wanting to cede the throne to Xu You 許由 are yet further examples of the dubious nature of certain historical events.

Ji Kang, however, criticizes these skeptics, saying they falsely take the deeds and teachings of the duke of Zhou and Confucius as their hinge (*guanjian* 關鍵) in order to rectify their will. For the *Daodejing*, "one good at locking up has no lock yet what is locked cannot be opened."[162] Not only do these people outwardly fool the world with their deceptive sincerity, they are internally spurred on (*biance* 鞭策) by fondness and passions. This is not what Confucius taught however: "The Master is skilled at gradually leading me on, step by step. He broadens me with culture and restrains me with the rites."[163] Their heart-mind gallops (*chizhou* 馳驟) around in the world's teachings and is caught between feelings of prosperity and humiliation. This is a play on what the *Zhuangzi* said: "Look into that closed room, the empty chamber where brightness is born! Fortune and blessing gather where there is stillness. But if you do not keep still—this is what is called sitting but racing around."[164] In doing so, they diminish their nature even though their thoughts do not leave their position. Why? As the *Lunyu* notes, "the gentleman's thoughts do not go beyond his office."[165] And so, people who dismiss the principle of nourishing life by relegating it to common discourse while, at the same time, talking about penetrating the hidden are, for Ji Kang, not to be reasoned with.

Having a long resentment of idle dwelling, you say it lacks happiness; having a deep dislike of going without cooked meat, you say it

is self-induced anxiety. Taking wine and beauty as supplying nourishment, you say a long life is not guaranteed. And so, everything you take as comprising happiness must be connected to horse-drawn carriages and enough food to fill one square zhang before you. Those who must wait for these before being satisfied say it is the naturalness of heavenly principle, and that to labor one's body for things is to lose one's will to desire. This is the state of a person's original life, yet it has become entangled in your discourse. The person who is thirsty only sees water; the lover of wine only seeks wine. Everyone knows these desires arise because they are diseased. If one follows their desires to fulfill their nature, then thirst and drinking wine are not diseases, licentiousness and drunkenness are not excessive, and the disciples of Jie and Zhi are all following what is natural. This, however, is not how my essay explains the meaning of ultimate principle.

From this point forward, Ji Kang directs his attention to the ultimate principle of things, a cosmological and natural ordering whose root lies in the Dao. He accuses Xiang Xiu of not partaking in idle dwelling (*xianju* 閑居) because there is supposedly no happiness therein; Ji Kang also mocks him for his insistence on always eating cooked meat. Without idleness to quiet the heart-mind and spirit, Xiang Xiu fills both with wine and beauty, saying these alone are enough to support life, however long it might last. What is more, wine and beauty are to be lavishly enjoyed, and happiness is to be extravagantly displayed, preferably in the form of horse-carriages and enough food to fill a space measuring one square *zhang* 丈.[166] For ancient Confucians such as Mencius, this behavior is unacceptable: "Food spread out on vast tables with hundreds of servants waiting in attendance—were my wishes to be fulfilled, I would have none of this."[167] Conversely, people who cultivate life by conforming to its principle proclaim that laboring one's body for things is akin to losing one's will to desire. This is something even Xunzi agreed with: "The gentleman makes things his servants. The petty man is servant to things."[168] Later, the *Huainanzi* had this to say on the matter: "Sages do not allow their own persons to be enslaved by external things and do not allow desires to disrupt their [inner] harmony."[169] These remarks nicely encapsulate the original state of human nature, however, Xiang Xiu has corrupted it with his interpretation.

When it comes to espousing the naturalness of human nature, no ancient text does a better job than the *Zhuangzi*. Take this passage as an example: "He who holds to true rightness does not lose the original form of his inborn nature."[170] About three-quarters of the way into the text, we are given a fuller description: "If you try to fulfill all your appetites and desires and indulge your likes and dislikes, then you will bring affliction to the true form of your inborn nature and fate."[171] There is little doubt such reasoning influenced Ji Kang's own thinking, however, Ji Kang is quick to warn readers that nourishing life is not simply about

following human nature. He writes that a thirsty person looks for water while the drunk looks for wine. The danger lies in extrapolating this analogy to human nature in its entirety, the implications of which would mean that drunkenness and lewd behavior are acceptable. Even more dangerous is the normalization of acts of violence, such as those conducted by the tyrant Jie and robber Zhi. The *Xunzi* explains: "What one finds base in Jie and robber Zhi and the petty man is due to the fact that they follow along with their inborn dispositions and nature and take comfort in utter lack of restraint."[172] This selfish way of living is not what Ji Kang means by obeying the ultimate principle.

Ultimate principle is truly minute yet the world easily drowns it out. However, one can only be aware of it after seeking it in one's body and knowing it by examining external things. As people move from young to old their fortunes rise and decline, and their love and hate flourishes and decays. What people enjoy in their youth is discarded in adulthood; what in the beginning is taken lightly ends up becoming important. At the time a thing gives us pleasure, we say it cannot be snatched away; if we regard it as disgraceful, we say it cannot be enjoyed. However, when moving to another city or changing one's territory, our feelings return to how they were in their beginning. If fondness and desire can change, how do we know that what we indulge in today is not in fact foul and rotten? If we formerly took a thing as worthless, how do we know it is not in fact rare and beautiful? If a servant suddenly rises to the post of senior official, they would abandon and deride people like the gatekeeper. To speak from this, whenever a thing is seen as trivial, these are feelings that occur in a specific situation. How is it they absolutely cannot change?

In answer to the question concerning the nature of ultimate principle, Ji Kang says it is minute and only knowable through a process of inner examination and outward discovery. What does this mean? Inwardly, people move from youth to old age, and as their age slides from one point to the other, their fortunes and feelings encounter corresponding changes. The issue Ji Kang has with this is the certainty with which we assess things throughout life, and our resistance to accepting what we thought of as insignificant was in fact significant, what we thought of as ugly was in fact beautiful. Human nature, however, has its inner constancy, its rootedness in the Dao that balances the pendulum swings of our feelings and desires. To rectify this and embrace the principle of nourishing life, we must remind ourselves that all trivializing or flattering thoughts arise in a controlled and specific context. To deny their propensity to change is to be blind to the minutiae of things.

When a person is starving for food, when they are about to obtain what they want, they feel pleased and their heart-mind is focused. Once they have their fill, however, they let go of these feelings, even detesting

and hating them. Such being the case, prosperity and eminence, wine and beauty, have a time when they can be let go of. Pythons are precious in the territory of Yue but if they are encountered in China, they are hated; embroidered robes are treasured in China but in the kingdom of Luo, they are discarded. At the time when things are no longer useful, they are like the pythons in China and embroidered robes in Luo. To take great harmony as perfect joy, prosperity and eminence will not satisfy people's attention; if tranquility and calmness are taken as perfect taste, then wine and beauty will not satisfy people's respect. If what secures satisfaction has a place, the vulgar that everyone delights in are but dung and dirt. How are they good enough to yearn for? The present speaker has not seen a state of perfect joy and is willing to diminish his years and injure life in order to do whatever he likes. This is like Li Si turning his back on the Confucian scholars and dying for a moment's desire, or like Zhufu exerting himself to try the flavors of the five sacrificial vessels. Furthermore, when a person enjoys the fish market, they devalue the fragrance of orchids and angelica. This is like the sea bird facing the Tailao sacrifice and growing distressed, or marquis Wen listening to ceremonial music and stopping-up his ears. Thus, to take prosperity and eminence as the tools of life, and say a person would find no delight in surpassing ten thousand generations, these arise from not having a master on the inside and relying on external things for joy. Although external things are bountiful, the sorrow they give is also present.

Just as we saw above with the person who is thirsty only thinking of water, here Ji Kang says the same thing concerning food. When hungry, we think of food; when full, we no longer think of it and are even disappointed with ourselves for having thought about it with such desperation. In other words, feelings come and go once their need has been satiated; however, the usefulness or uselessness of said feelings is not universal. Ji Kang thus uses the example of a python. In Yue 越[173] it is a beloved animal but the Chinese hated it. Prior to Ji Kang, the *Huainanzi* said as much: "When the people of Yue catch a python, they take it to be quite a [valuable] rarity, but when [the people of] the Middle Kingdom get hold of one, they discard it as useless."[174] The *Zhuangzi* also tells us that the people of Yue "cut their hair short and tattooed their bodies."[175]

Whether it is the people of Yue, or those of Luo 祼國 who shun clothing, great harmony leads to perfect joy. Perfect joy, according to the *Zhuangzi*, "brings order to the four seasons and bestows a final harmony on the ten thousand things."[176] From great harmony to perfect joy, we can apply the characteristics of tranquility and calmness to perfect taste. Why? Because they lead to the ultimate principle of the Dao. If a person can attain this level of cultivation, they will view their delights as but dung and dirt (*fentu* 糞土). That Xiang Xiu had yet to see perfect joy is all the justification he needs to injure his life in pursuit of his desires. This is akin to Li Si 李斯[177] losing his life to satisfy a moment's

desire, or Zhufu 主父[178] exerting himself to eat from the five sacrificial vessels (*wuding* 五鼎).

Another example is the person who enjoys the fish market, specifically its smell, degrading the fragrance of orchid and angelica. To take one standard as a measure for judging other standards, especially when it comes to nourishing life, is no different from the sea bird facing the Tailao 太牢 sacrifice and becoming distressed. This story is from the *Zhuangzi* and involves a seabird that caught the attention of the marquis of Lu 魯侯, who thereupon caught it and brought it to his ancestral temple. He offered it meat and wine and after three days, the bird died. The moral of the story is this: do not use what nourishes people to nourish birds but use what is suitable to nourish it as a bird.[179] Besides the case of the sea bird, there is also the example of marquis Wen of Wei 魏文侯 hearing ceremonial music and plugging up his ears. For this account, we can turn to the *Liji*:

> The marquis Wen of Wei asked Zixia, saying: When in my square-cut dark robes and cap I listen to the ancient music, I am only afraid that I shall go to sleep. When I listen to the music of Zheng and Wei, I do not feel tired.[180]

Thus, arguing against what Xiang Xiu said in Section 7 of his rebuttal—"one would find no delight in surpassing ten thousand generations"—Ji Kang is saying Xiang Xiu does not have an inner master but simply derives his joy from external things.

Having a master within, a person can use what is inside to enjoy what is outside; although there are no bells or drums, their joy is already provided. Thus, obtaining the will does not require an official's carriage or cap. Having perfect joy is to avoid having pent-up joy and not be ensnared by gain or loss. Furthermore, when a person's parents are ill, they are first besieged but then are healed, hence anxiety and delight occur simultaneously. To speak from this, it is not as good as having nothing to delight in, a fact that can be known. Such being the case, how is a lack of joy not perfect joy? Thus, those who naturally follow heavenly harmony take the Dao and its virtue as their teacher and friend, enjoy the transformations of Yin and Yang, obtain perpetual long life, rely on the natural to support their body, and conjoin with heaven and earth in order to avoid decaying. Who will pay tribute to them?

Bringing this section of his reply to a close, Ji Kang's argument stresses the importance of acknowledging what is already present within us and not get distracted chasing things that will only come back to harm us. As the *Huainanzi* notes: "[It is] because you do not use what is intrinsic to bring contentment to what is extrinsic but, rather, use what is extrinsic to bring contentment to what is intrinsic."[181] Embracing one's inner master is enough to enjoy perfect joy; it is not found in bells or drums,

nor in the carriages and caps of the nobles and officials. This is why the *Zhuangzi* wrote: "When the men of ancient times spoke of the fulfillment of ambition, they did not mean fine carriages and caps."[182] Thus, perfect joy contributes to the nourishment of life by preventing the accumulation of joy or becoming ensnared by gain or loss, an idea succinctly expressed in the *Liji*: "The scholar is not cast down, or cut from his root, by poverty and mean condition; he is not elated or exhausted by riches and noble condition."[183]

Gain and loss, like beauty and ugliness, trap people into making choices that are unclear to begin with. To illustrate this, Ji Kang offers the example of sick parents. They are first besieged by disease and their fortunes decline, but then they recover and their fortunes flourish once more. Given this, anxiety and delight occur simultaneously, but it would be better to have nothing to delight in because perfect joy is an outgrowth of perfect harmony, which entails tranquility and calmness, and perfect harmony is to be one with the Dao. Thus, Ji Kang tells us, to follow heavenly harmony is make the Dao and its virtue one's teacher and friend, which the *Zhuangzi* explains as follows:

> He who has a clear understanding of the virtue of heaven and earth may be called the great source, the great ancestor. He harmonizes with heaven and by doing so he brings equitable accord to the world and harmonizes with men as well.[184]

This, then, is to discover the alternations of Yin and Yang and conjoin with heaven and earth to avoid decaying.

Section 7

Nourishing life has five difficulties: not extinguishing fame and profit is first; not eliminating joy and anger is second; not expelling music and beauty is third; not severing oneself from richly flavored food is fourth; having a spirit that is anxious, decayed, and scattered is fifth. With these five securely present, although the heart-mind hopes for extremely old age, the mouth utters perfect words, a person sucks and chews the eminent medicinal herbs while breathing in the great Yang, they cannot but help returning to manage them and prematurely end their years. When these five are no longer found in a person's breast, honesty and accordance will daily increase and their mysterious virtue will be daily completed. Without praying for happiness, they will have good fortune; not seeking longevity, they will prolong their life. This is the effect of the great principle of nourishing life.

We now enter the concluding section of Ji Kang's reply, a section that reiterates the main points of the preceding sections while introducing a handful of new ones. First and foremost is Ji Kang's thesis that

nourishing life has five difficulties: the first is not extinguishing fame and profit (*mingli bu mie* 名利不滅), the second is not eliminating joy and anger (*xinu bu chu* 喜怒不除), the third is not expelling music and beauty (*shengse bu qu* 聲色不去), the fourth is not severing oneself from richly flavored food (*ziwei bu jue* 滋味不絕), and the fifth is having a spirit that is anxious, decayed, and scattered (*shen lü xiao san* 神慮消散). These five cover all aspects of human life and social intercourse and must be eliminated from the heart-mind, will, and spirit, otherwise a person will fall victim to a premature death. It must be said that even when a person craves a long life, they speak properly about attaining it, and take the superior drugs while inhaling the breath of the great Yang to assist them, as long as the five difficulties are present, they will fail. Reading the *Huainanzi*, we see the benefits of breathing the ultimate breath of the Dao: "For this reason, the sages [merely] inhaled and exhaled the *qi* of Yin and Yang, and none of the myriad living things failed to flourish as they acknowledged [the sages'] potency in harmonious compliance."[185]

If a person manages to eliminate these five difficulties from their heart-mind, honesty and accordance become stronger with each passing day and their mysterious virtue (*xuande* 玄德) is daily renewed. Regarding honesty and accordance, the *Yijing* tell us: "One whom heaven helps is someone who is in accord with it. One whom people help is someone who is trustworthy."[186] As for mysterious virtue, it is explained in the *Daodejing* thusly: "They mature, yet he is not their steward. This we call mysterious virtue."[187] Such a person has no need to pray for joy and their life will be full of good fortune. Shen Nong is an example of this: "In ancient times, when Shen Nong held possession of the empire, he performed the seasonal sacrifices with the utmost reverence, but he did not pray for blessings."[188] Finally, without deliberately wanting a long life, the person who can banish the five difficulties from their heart-mind will naturally prolong their life. The above, Ji Kang says, are the results of employing the principle of nourishing life.

However, there are those whose actions exceed Zeng and Min. They bear in mind benevolence and righteousness, move in accordance with centrality and harmony, and have no great accumulations. Saying the principles of humanity are already complete in these ways, they are naturally satisfied. To act thusly without washing away delight and anger, to calm the spirit and breath while longing to retreat from old age and postpone one's years, I have yet to hear of this. Others resist their will and strive for antiquity, but not finding any flourishment in fame and position, they see themselves as surpassing those who speed after them. Beyond these, others still utilize their wisdom to manage the world but having not encountered calamity, they think highly of themselves. This way of using the body, whether young men or village elders, is the same. Discussing life-preservation in this way is to leave something out. Other people discard the world and avoid large gatherings. Having an

unadulterated will and breath, they do not cut off the five grains but supplement them with mushrooms; however, doing so does not add to their short lifespan. Still others have already earmarked their jade and dry goods, and riding upon the six breaths, are able to cherish the light and peer inwards. Condensing their spirit and returning to simplicity, they perch their heart-mind on the bank of dark mystery and cherish their breath in the collectivity of the "nothing greater than." Given this, a person can retreat from old age and postpone their years.

In contrast to the persons living in accordance with the principle of nourishing life, others seek to surpass the behavior of Zengzi 曾子 and Min Ziqian 閔子騫, two disciples of Confucius, by being mindful of benevolence and righteousness, not violating centrality and harmony, and abstaining from accumulating things. Be this as it may, the principles of Confucianism do nothing to nourish life insofar as they do not wash away delight and anger, or calm one's spirit and breath. Additionally, others try to return to the ways of antiquity, yet not deriving any sense of bravado in the fame and position of the ancients, they elevate themselves above those who rush after such measures of life-achievement. Still others employ their knowledge to administer the world and not being touched by disaster, believe their way to be the best. To discuss life-preservation in the aforementioned ways, Ji Kang says, is incomplete. In the blunt words of the *Zhuangzi*: "How pitiful the men of the world, who think that simply nourishing the body is enough to preserve life."[189]

If the above methods are lacking, which ones does Ji Kang take to be more capable? One is to abandon the world and abstain from social festivities. The reason, according to the *Zhuangzi*, is: "He who wants to avoid doing anything for his body had best abandon the world."[190] Living in seclusion and relying on Nature for nourishment is to have a will and breath that is unperturbed and pure in clarity. While these persons still eat the five grains, they also consume a mushroom (*zhi* 芝) thought to have miraculous powers. As good as this is, however, it does nothing to increase their lifespan.

This brings us to the third group of people, those who have earmarked their jade and dry goods in preparation for their spiritual flight on the six cosmic breaths. The influence of the *Zhuangzi* on the imagery used by Ji Kang in these concluding lines of his essay is remarkable. Although the phrase "six breaths" is first used in Qu Yuan's poem "Distant Roaming," the *Zhuangzi*'s implementation is the one Ji Kang has in mind: "If he had only mounted on the truth of heaven and earth, ridden the changes of the six breaths, and thus wandered through the boundless, then what would he have had to depend on."[191] In addition to riding on the breath of the universe, these individuals are able to condense their spirit (*ningshen* 凝神) and return to simplicity (*pu* 璞). Both concepts are derived from the *Zhuangzi*. The first is from the following passage: "By concentrating his spirit, he [the spiritual person] can protect creatures

from sickness and plague and make the harvest plentiful"[192] while the second is from this passage: "A man of true brightness and purity who can enter into simplicity, who can return to the primitive through inaction."[193] What comes of this is the unique ability to perch (*xi* 棲) their heart-mind on the bank of dark mystery (*xuanming zhi ya* 玄冥之崖) and cherish their breath within the collective breath of the Dao, a collectivity of which there is nothing greater. Only in these circumstances can a person prolong their years.

All of these numerous points, when combined, are useful; however, all of them must be present. It is similar to the shaft and axle, wheel and linchpin, not one can be missing. And yet, people are biased in sight and each prepares for their fears. Shan Bao managed the inward yet forgot the outward, while Zhang Yi was attracted to the outward and lost the inward. What is more, Qi was defeated by heeding warnings of invasion from the west of Ji, and Qin prepared itself against invasion from the Rong and Di and so exhausted itself. All of these calamities are due to not being thorough. To amass goodness and tread honestly, the world frequently hears of this; to be careful in speech and reserved in food and drink, scholars all recognize this. However, it seems no one knows how to proceed from here. Please allow those who are already awakened to discuss this matter with those who will be awakened in the future.

And so, we reach the end of Ji Kang's discourse on nourishing life. All that he has said, both in his original essay and here in his reply to Xiang Xiu, must be present to succeed. One can think of it like the parts of a carriage: although the shaft (*yuan* 轅), axle (*zhou* 軸), wheel (*lun* 輪), and linchpin (*xia* 轄) have their own purpose, if just one is missing, the carriage will not move. The same principle of collective harmony between inner and outer applies to nourishing life. However, the common people overlook these hidden yet critical aspects of life and focus their attention on what can be seen and enjoyed—the passenger compartment of the carriage.

Historically, there have always been cases of people obsessing over one aspect to the detriment of the other. Shan Bao 單豹 is a case in point; he perfected what was within himself but forgot to tend to what lies outside of himself.[194] Other examples include Zhang Yi 張毅 losing what was inside due to his devotion to the outside, the defeat of the state of Qi, and the exhaustion of the people of Qin as they prepared to be invaded by the Rong 戎 and Di 狄 tribes. These disasters are the result of not being thorough. Indeed, amassing goodness and treading honestly are words heard throughout the world; being careful in speech and reserved in food and drink are things known to scholars throughout the world. The problem, Ji Kang says, is that no one says what should be done next! Thus, he invites readers that are already awakened to the truth of nourishing life to come forward and teach those who have yet to grasp it.

Notes

1 I have discussed this essay in Chai 2017a. Readers conversant in French will find a translation of this essay along with Xiang Xiu's rebuttal in Holzman 1957: 92–121.
2 *Yijing*, "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 562; Lynn 1994: 82.
3 *Baopuzi Neipian* 抱樸子內篇, chapter 12. See Wang Ming, 226; Ware, 203.
4 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. See Guo Qingfan, 11; Watson, 2.
5 This story appears in chapter 19 of the *Huainanzi*. See He Ning, 1347; Major et al., 780–781. The story of Nanrong Chou meeting Laozi also appears in chapter 2 of the *Wenzi* (see Wang Liqi, 104) but in this version, we are told he did not eat for ten days. The source of Nanrong's encounter with Laozi, however, is chapter 23 of the *Zhuangzi*. It should be pointed out that in the *Zhuangzi*, his name is written Nanrong Chu 南榮趎, with the character *chu* pronounced *chou* 疇. See Guo Qingfan, 778; Watson, 191–193.
6 *Liji*, chapter 2. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 133.
7 *Huainanzi*, chapter 20. See He Ning, 1425; Major et al., 834.
8 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 62; Major et al., 66.
9 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 82; Major et al., 74.
10 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 12. See Guo Qingfan, 424; Watson, 89.
11 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 11. See Guo Qingfan, 381; Watson, 78.
12 *Liezi*, chapter 2. See Yang Bojun 1985: 41; Graham, 34.
13 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 63; Major et al., 67.
14 *Liji*, chapter 17. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 112.
15 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 15. See Guo Qingfan, 535; Watson, 119.
16 *Huainanzi*, chapter 20. See He Ning, 1395; Major et al., 809–810.
17 *Lunheng*, chapter 24. See Huang Hui, 337; Forke, volume 1: 349.
18 Zhou Shandong says Ji Kang's philosophy of nourishing life involves four modes of the heart-mind: wisdom (*xinzhi* 心智), intelligence (*xinling* 心灵), the will (*xinzhi* 心志), and a person's state of mind (*xinjing* 心境). For more, see Zhou Shandong, 57–58.
19 Up to the Tang 唐 dynasty, one *hu* 斛 equaled ten *dou* 斗, which was reduced to five *dou* in the Song 宋 dynasty, whereby one *dou* equals ten *sheng* 升 (litre). One *mu* 畝 is equal to 667 square meters or 1/15 of a hectare.
20 For a discussion on the consumption of drugs and wine in Ji Kang's time, see Xu Gongchi, 52–58.
21 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 29. See Guo Qingfan, 1010; Watson, 263.
22 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 61; Major et al., 66.
23 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 63; Major et al., 67.
24 *Guanzi*, chapter 49. See Li Xianfeng, 947; Rickett, volume 2: 52.
25 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 6. See Guo Qingfan, 128; Watson, 48.
26 *Lunheng*, chapter 24. See Huang Hui, 338; Forke, volume 1: 349.
27 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 4. See Guo Qingfan, 177; Watson, 32.
28 *Huainanzi*, chapter 7. See He Ning, 514; Major et al., 245.
29 This story appears in chapter 21 of the *Hanfeizi* as well as the *Shiji*. The *Hanfeizi* version refers to marquis Huan of Qi 齊桓侯 who is actually duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685–643 BCE). The story is as follows: "Bian Que visited the state of Qi and was invited to see duke Huan. Bian Que saw the duke for first time and said he has an illness, though not yet serious. Duke Huan became angry and thought Bian Que was cursing him. Five days later, Bian Que visited the duke and said that the illness has spread from your skin to your blood vessels and that he should get treated soon. After five days, Bian Que saw the duke and his illness was visibly worse than

before. Bian Que said the poison has entered inner organs. Bian Que visited after yet another five days and as soon as he saw the duke he turned around and walked out. Duke Huan sent a messenger to ask Bian Que who said the illness has entered the bones and marrow and there is no way to cure it. Five days after this, duke Huan felt very ill and sent people to invite Bian Que to examine him, but Bian Que had already departed. Left untreated, duke Huan died soon thereafter." See *Shiji*, book 105: 2793.

30 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 539; Lynn 1994: 51.

31 One possible explanation for "irrigation ditches" is that Ji Kang is referring to the twelve meridian channels (*jingluo* 經絡) in traditional Chinese medicine. There are four pairs of three Yin and three Yang channels, with two pairs located in the arms and two pairs in the legs.

32 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 17. See Guo Qingfan, 563; Watson, 127.

33 *Hanfeizi*, chapter 21. See Wang Xianshen, 170; Liao volume 1: 226.

34 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 68; Major et al., 69.

35 *Daodejing*, chapter 14. See Lou Yulie, 31; Lynn 1999: 72.

36 *Lunyu*, book 19. See Cheng Shude, 1307; Slingerland, 222.

37 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13. See Guo Qingfan, 457; Watson, 99.

38 *Daodejing*, chapter 19. See Lou Yulie, 45; Lynn 1999: 82.

39 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 11. See Guo Qingfan, 381; Watson, 78.

40 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 15. See Guo Qingfan, 538; Watson, 120.

41 *Huainanzi*, chapter 2. See He Ning, 102; Major et al., 88.

42 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 22. See Guo Qingfan, 731; Watson, 176.

43 *Daodejing*, chapter 65. See Lou Yulie, 168; Lynn 1999: 172–173.

44 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 12. See Guo Qingfan, 424; Watson, 89.

45 Indeed, some scholars read Ji Kang's essay as an aesthetic activity, either of the Dao, one's physical body, or as a spiritual awakening. See the respective papers by Huang Wenjie; Wu Yizhen; and Yang Ziping. For a detailed study of Ji Kang's aesthetic thought as it applies to all of his essays, see Lu Zheng.

46 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19. See Guo Qingfan, 632; Watson, 146.

47 Ziqi was the style name of Xiang Xiu 向秀 (227–272 CE). Xiang Xiu wrote a commentary on the *Zhuangzi* and he was a close friend of Ji Kang's.

48 *Guanzi*, chapter 64. See Li Xianfeng, 1170; Rickett, volume 1: 66.

49 *Huainanzi*, chapter 14. See He Ning, 1016; Major et al., 557.

50 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 56; Watson, 9.

51 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 6. See Guo Qingfan, 262; Watson, 49.

52 *Liezi*, chapter 7. See Yang Bojun 1985: 234; Graham, 153.

53 This line is taken from the *Yijing*: "Of things respected and thought eminent, none is greater than the rich and noble position." *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 558; Lynn 1994: 66.

54 *Yijing*, "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 558; Lynn 1994: 77.

55 *Lunyu*, book 4. See Cheng Shude, 232; Slingerland, 31.

56 The *Huainanzi* says something very similar: "It can be said of the duke of Zhou that he was able to grasp when enough was enough." *Huainanzi*, chapter 13. See He Ning, 951; Major et al., 506.

57 *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 7, chapter 2. See Knoblock and Riegel, 177.

58 *Huainanzi*, chapter 19. See He Ning, 1312; Major et al., 766.

59 Yan Yuan 顏淵 and Ran Boniu 冉伯牛 were disciples of Confucius.

60 *Yijing*, "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 562; Lynn 1994: 82.

61 The first of these is from poem 302 of the *Shijing* while the second appears in poem 154.

62 *Lunheng*, chapter 62. See Huang Hui, 875; Forke, volume 1: 194.

63 *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 2, chapter 3. See Knoblock and Riegel, 84.

64 Xishi was a famous beauty in antiquity and appears in a number of texts from that time, such as the *Guanzi*, *Mozi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Xunzi*, *Hanfeizi*, and *Huainanzi*.
65 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 14. See Guo Qingfan, 515; Watson, 113.
66 *Daodejing*, chapter 3. See Lou Yulie, 8; Lynn 1999: 55.
67 Yao, Shun, and Yu are legendary figures from high antiquity, Tang founded the Shang dynasty, Wen and Wu founded the Zhou dynasty, while the duke of Zhou was king Wu's brother. The first book of the *Shiji* provides further information on the lifespan of Yao and Shun, as does chapter 4 of the *Lunheng*. For more, see Huang Hui, 31; Forke, volume 1: 315–316.
68 *Huainanzi*, chapter 10. See He Ning, 715; Major et al., 357.
69 *Liezi*, chapter 7. See Yang Bojun 1985: 229; Graham, 147.
70 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 11. See Guo Qingfan, 364; Watson, 74.
71 *Liji*, chapter 28. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 306–307.
72 The images presented in this sentence are borrowed from the *Zhuangzi*. "[The gentleman] commands corpse-like stillness and dragon vision" is from chapter 11 while "gave myself the burning moxa treatment when I wasn't even sick" is from chapter 29. See Guo Qingfan, 369 and 1001; Watson, 76 and 259.
73 Sima Xiangru (179–117 BCE) was a famous poet from the Western Han dynasty.
74 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 16. See Guo Qingfan, 548; Watson, 122.
75 The Chinese character Ji Kang uses for grubs (*xie* 蝎) literally means "scorpion." It should, in fact, be understood as *zhuchong* 蛀蟲, which translates as "an insect that eats paper, cloth, or wood." The *Lunheng*, chapter 49 is devoted to insects and it refers to *xie* as follows: "Cassia trees have woodworms, and mulberry trees, wood fretters." See Huang Hui, 717; Forke, volume 2: 366.
76 *Daodejing*, chapter 38. See Lou Yulie, 93; Lynn 1999: 119.
77 *Hanfeizi*, chapter 20. See Wang Xianshen, 134; Liao, volume 1: 174.
78 *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 1, chapter 3. See Knoblock and Riegel, 69.
79 *Daodejing*, chapter 50. See Lou Yulie, 134; Lynn 1999: 147.
80 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 5. See Guo Qingfan, 221; Watson, 40–41.
81 *Lunyu*, book 4. See Cheng Shude, 232; Slingerland, 31.
82 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 14. See Guo Qingfan, 527; Watson, 116–117.
83 *Lunyu*, book 13. See Cheng Shude, 931; Slingerland, 149.
84 For more on the connection between Ji Kang's theory of life nourishment and his call to return to Nature, see Sun Shimin 2007. To understand how this issue was framed in the classical Daoism of Laozi and Zhuangzi, see Nelson, 24–42. For more on Ji Kang's argument that life nourishment is related to the interdependence of things in Nature, see Sun Shimin 2009. An in-depth look into the portrayal of Nature in Wei-Jin thought is offered by Rong Zhaozu.
85 *Daodejing*, chapter 49. See Lou Yulie, 129; Lynn 1999: 143.
86 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 11. See Guo Qingfan, 364; Watson, 74.
87 *Daodejing*, chapter 48. See Lou Yulie, 128; Lynn 1999: 143.
88 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 74; Major, et al., 72.
89 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 6. See Guo Qingfan, 272; Watson, 50.
90 Ziwen's appointment to high office is noted in the *Lunyu*: "Prime minister Ziwen was given three times the post of prime minister, and yet he never showed a sign of pleasure; he was removed from this office three times, and yet never showed a sign of resentment." *Lunyu*, book 5. See Cheng Shude, 331; Slingerland, 47.
91 Liu Hui's dismissal from high office is noted in the *Lunyu*: "When Liuxia Hui was serving as captain of the guard, he was dismissed three times.

People said to him, ‘Sir, is this not grounds for simply leaving?’ He replied, ‘If I serve others by means of the upright Dao, where can I go and not end up being dismissed three times? If, instead, I were to serve others in a crooked, accommodating manner, what need would I have to leave my home state?’” *Lunyu*, book 18. See Cheng Shude, 1254; Slingerland, 214.

92 *Mengzi*, book 6A. See Yang Bojun 2013: 250; Bloom, 130.
93 *Lunyu*, book 17. See Cheng Shude, 1222; Slingerland, 206–207.
94 *Yijing*, “*Xici I*.” See Lou Yulie, 546; Lynn 1994: 58.
95 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 11. See Guo Qingfan, 364; Watson, 74.
96 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 15. See Guo Qingfan, 542; Watson, 120.
97 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 4–7; Major et al., 50.
98 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 69; Major et al., 69.
99 Zhuangzi’s example is this: “When the mole drinks at the river, he takes no more than a bellyful.” See *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. Guo Qingfan, 24; Watson, 3–4.
100 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13. See Guo Qingfan, 481; Watson, 105.
101 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 8. See Guo Qingfan, 311; Watson, 60.
102 *Daodejing*, chapter 70. See Lou Yulie, 176; Lynn 1999: 178.
103 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 69; Major et al., 69.
104 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 16. See Guo Qingfan, 558; Watson, 124–125.
105 This approach to nourishing life is discussed in Zhuo Yufang, 44–48; and Zeng Chunhai 2009: 95–107.
106 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 9. See Guo Qingfan, 336; Watson, 66.
107 *Daodejing*, chapter 46. See Lou Yulie, 125; Lynn 1999: 140.
108 *Liji*, chapter 17. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 96.
109 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 23. See Guo Qingfan, 810; Watson, 197.
110 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19. See Guo Qingfan, 632; Watson, 145.
111 *Huainanzi*, chapter 7. See He Ning, 544; Major et al., 255.
112 The Chinese is repeated verbatim from chapter 3 of the *Daodejing*. See Lou Yulie, 8; Lynn 1999: 55.
113 *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 5, chapter 4. See Knoblock and Riegel, 142–143.
114 *Liezi*, chapter 5. See Yang Bojun 1985: 171; Graham, 105.
115 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 27. See Guo Qingfan, 950; Watson, 235.
116 This story appears in chapter 20. See Guo Qingfan, 699–700. Watson, 165.
117 *Huainanzi*, chapter 7. See He Ning, 542–543; Major et al., 255.
118 *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 12, chapter 5. See Knoblock and Riegel, 268.
119 *Huainanzi*, chapter 18. See He Ning, 1279; Major et al., 739.
120 *Daodejing*, chapter 1. See Lou Yulie, 2; Lynn 1999: 52.
121 *Lunyu*, book 17. See Cheng Shude, 1210; Slingerland, 203.
122 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 31. See Guo Qingfan, 1029; Watson, 274.
123 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 24. See Guo Qingfan, 864; Watson, 211.
124 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 54; Major et al., 62.
125 *Guanzi*, chapter 80. See Li Xianfeng, 1401; Rickett, volume 2: 448.
126 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 20. See Guo Qingfan, 679–680; Watson, 159–160. Observant readers will notice that Ji Kang’s expression “脩身以明汙, 顯智以驚愚” is a reversed and slightly amended version of Zhuangzi’s “知以驚愚, 修身以明汙.”
127 *Lunyu*, book 7. See Cheng Shude, 500; Slingerland, 75.
128 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 31. See Guo Qingfan, 1034; Watson, 277.
129 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 26. See Guo Qingfan, 928; Watson, 229.
130 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 11. See Guo Qingfan, 371; Watson, 76.
131 *Lunheng*, chapter 24. See Huang Hui, 334; Forke, volume 1: 346.
132 “Sit in forgetfulness” comes from chapter 6 of the *Zhuangzi*. See Guo Qingfan, 284; Watson, 53.

133 *Huainanzi*, chapter 6. See He Ning, 447; Major et al., 215.
134 Dou Gong became blind at the age of thirteen and began learning the *qin*. When he met emperor Wendi of the Han 漢文帝 (r. 179–156 BCE) he was reputedly one hundred and eighty years old. See Loewe, 76.
135 *Huainanzi*, chapter 17. See He Ning, 1203; Major et al., 685. Chapter 20 notes that: "The *yuantian* silkworm in one year [can be] harvested twice. It is not that this is not profitable, but the royal laws prohibit it because of the harm it does to the mulberry trees." See He Ning, 1431; Major et al., 838.
136 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. See Guo Qingfan, 7; Watson, 1. *Yao e* 夭閼 can also be translated as "block and interrupt 受阻折而中斷" which, when applied to life, is a poetic way of saying "die young."
137 *Lunyu*, book 19. See Cheng Shude, 1335; Slingerland, 228.
138 Duke Yin, 3rd year. See Durrant et al., 25.
139 *Mengzi*, book 1B. See Yang Bojun 2013: 31; Bloom, 17.
140 *Daodejing*, chapter 6. See Lou Yulie, 16; Lynn 1999: 62.
141 *Yijing*, Qian 乾 hexagram, "first Yang," "Commentary on the Words of the Text." See Lou Yulie, 214; Lynn 1994: 132.
142 The difference between men of yellow and white hair is explained in the *Lunheng* thusly: "Yellow is the sign of maturity, white of old age. After a plant has become yellow, it may be watered and tended ever so much, it does not become green again. When the hair has turned white, no eating of drugs nor any care bestowed upon one's nature can make it black again." See *Lunheng*, chapter 24. See Huang Hui, 319; Forke, volume 1: 337.
143 *Lunyu*, book 6. See Cheng Shude, 369; Slingerland, 56.
144 *Lunyu*, book 6. See Cheng Shude, 365; Slingerland, 53.
145 *Liji*, chapter 3. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 229.
146 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 39; Major et al., 57.
147 *Ye* 腋 literally means "armpit." Ji Kang does not have this meaning in mind but what lies beneath the surface of the armpit: axillary artery and vein, axillary nerves, lymph nodes, fat, and loose connective tissue. It is thus a focal point of bodily fluid which is what Ji Kang is referring to.
148 The stomach, large and small intestines, gall bladder, urinary bladder, and three *jiao* (三焦), or cavities, comprising: upper (heart and lung), middle (spleen and stomach), and lower (kidney and urinary bladder).
149 This insect seems to be of the same species as the tree grubs mentioned at the start of Section 1 of Ji Kang's reply.
150 *Lunheng*, chapter 24. See Huang Hui, 324; Forke, volume 1: 339.
151 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 22. See Guo Qingfan, 741; Watson, 180.
152 *Lunheng*, chapter 24. See Huang Hui, 337; Forke, volume 1: 349.
153 See Legge, volume 2, 1871: 334. The wasp described by Ji Kang belongs to the family Vespidae while that mentioned in the *Shijing* belongs to the superfamily Sphecoidea, of which the Vespidae is a member. The female wasp searches the leaves of trees for caterpillars, paralyzes them, and carries them back to its nest where they are given as food for their larvae.
154 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 40; Major et al., 57.
155 Commonly known as Largehead Atractylodes Rhizome, this plant has spikey flowers resembling thistles. In traditional Chinese medicine, its roots are first dried and later used to make medicinal tea. The health benefits are: increase bodily strength, boost the immune system, regulate the stomach and other digestive organs. It is also used to reinvigorate the spleen and replenish *qi*.
156 All of the persons mentioned here appear in Liu Xiang's 劉向 (77–6 BCE) work, *Biographies of Immortals* (*Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳).
157 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. See Guo Qingfan, 11; Watson, 2.

158 *Huainanzi*, chapter 14. See He Ning, 1041; Major et al., 571.
159 Pengzu appears in a number of ancient texts, such as the *Zhuangzi*, *Lüshi Chunqiu*, *Xunzi*, *Huainanzi*, *Lunheng*, and others, and is the paradigm example of a person having a long life.
160 He is discussed in the *Biographies of Spirits and Immortals* (*Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳) attributed to Ge Hong.
161 Li Shaojun is also listed in the *Shenxian zhuan*.
162 *Daodejing*, chapter 27. See Lou Yulie, 71; Lynn 1999: 100.
163 *Lunyu*, book 9. See Cheng Shude, 594; Slingerland, 90.
164 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 4. See Guo Qingfan, 150; Watson, 26.
165 *Lunyu*, book 14. See Cheng Shude, 1008; Slingerland, 165.
166 One *zhang* 丈 is equal to ten *chi* 尺, or 3.3 meters.
167 *Mengzi*, book 7B. See Yang Bojun 2013: 315; Bloom, 164.
168 *Xunzi*, chapter 2. See Wang Xianqian, 27; Hutton, 12.
169 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 68; Major et al., 69.
170 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 8. See Guo Qingfan, 317; Watson, 61.
171 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 24. See Guo Qingfan, 818; Watson, 199.
172 *Xunzi*, chapter 23. See Wang Xianqian, 442; Hutton, 253.
173 Yue was a kingdom located in south-east China (present-day Zhejiang province) from the Xia dynasty through to the end of the *Spring and Autumn Period* (8th–5th century BCE) when it was conquered by the state of Chu 楚.
174 *Huainanzi*, chapter 7. See He Ning, 551–552; Major et al., 259.
175 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. See Guo Qingfan, 31; Watson, 5.
176 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 14. See Guo Qingfan, 502; Watson, 110. Zhuangzi here is speaking of music but his meaning also applies to joy.
177 Li Si (312–208 BCE) was a student of Xunzi and later became the prime minister of the Qin dynasty. He was ordered to be executed by Zhao Gao 趙高 (d. 207 BCE), another court official, as part of his plot to install the son of the crown prince, Fusu 扶蘇, on the throne after the Qin emperor's death.
178 Zhaofu Yan 主父偃 (d. 126 BCE) served as counselor of the palace (*zhong dafu* 中大夫) in the court of emperor Wu of the Han dynasty 漢武帝 (r. 141–87 BCE). After this appointment, he became a counselor to the prince of Qi 齊 but was executed for revealing the secret relationship the prince was having with his sister. The five food vessels were presented to counselors during sacrificial ceremonies, each one containing a meat dish.
179 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 18. See Guo Qingfan, 665–666; Watson, 143. A slightly different version of this story also appears in chapter 19.
180 *Liji*, chapter 17. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 116–117.
181 *Huainanzi*, chapter 1. See He Ning, 70; Major et al., 70.
182 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 16. See Guo Qingfan, 558; Watson, 124.
183 *Liji*, chapter 38. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 409.
184 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13. See Guo Qingfan, 458; Watson, 99.
185 *Huainanzi*, chapter 2. See He Ning, 134; Major et al., 99.
186 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 554; Lynn 1994: 67.
187 *Daodejing*, chapter 51. See Lou Yulie, 137; Lynn 1999: 150.
188 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 28. See Guo Qingfan, 988; Watson, 250.
189 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19. See Guo Qingfan, 630; Watson, 145.
190 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19. See Guo Qingfan, 632; Watson, 145.
191 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. See Guo Qingfan, 17; Watson, 3.
192 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. See Guo Qingfan, 28; Watson, 4.
193 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 12. See Guo Qingfan, 438; Watson, 92–93.
194 The story of Shan Bao appears in the *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19. See Guo Qingfan, 646; Watson, 149.

5 Fortunes of Life

Residences Are Not Auspicious or Inauspicious, One Must Assist Life 宅無吉凶攝生論

by Ruan Kan[1]

Section 1

Those who are good at seeking longevity and strength must first know where premature death and disease come from before they can prevent their arrival. If disaster arises in this and prevention is used for that, then people will not recover from disaster. The world has its taboos when it comes to locating a person's residence and burying the dead, and to Yin and Yang, measures and numbers, and punishment and integrity. Where do these come from? From not seeing human nature and fate, and from not knowing disaster and blessings. Being unseen, they are foolishly sought after; being unknown, they are used to seek blessings. It is thus that one good at preserving life sees all that is appropriate to human nature and fate, and knows all that leads to disaster and blessings. Thus, seeking them is real and preventing them is true.

Ruan Kan 阮侃 opens his essay by drawing a connection between human nature and fate.[2] In order to stave off premature death, a person must not only properly tend to the needs of their body, breath, and spirit, as Ji Kang so thoroughly illustrated in his essay *On Nourishing Life*, but be familiar with the various taboos (*ji* 忌) surrounding the location of their residence (*zhai* 宅) and grave. Ruan Kan was not the first thinker to pay attention to matters of geomancy (*fengshui* 風水); much earlier, the *Guanzi* wrote: "Punishment and benevolence should correspond to the four seasons. If they correspond to the seasons, good fortune will arise; but if they are at odds with them, disaster will strike."[3] The fortune, or lack thereof, that finds a person depends on whether they have correctly grasped their inborn nature and fate; if they did, they will enjoy blessings but if they did not, disaster will befall them. The remainder of Ruan Kan's essay is devoted to showing how this influence works.

DOI: 10.4324/9780429331428-5

If a person has a lot to drink and then walks around, their limbs will hurt; if they repeatedly walk in the wind, they will catch an itchy poison. If a person sits in a damp place for a long time, they will become partially paralyzed; if they enjoy the inner quarters of a lady without end, they will end up confused and lost to the illness of lust. If this class of things causes calamity, it also expels longevity, yet people excavate graves and build residences, wasting their days and burdening their bodies in search of them. When a disease is born in a person's form but the cure is given to earth and wood, this disease has no path to recovery.

To demonstrate how environmental factors can just as easily cause one's fortunes to wane as lapses of judgment, Ruan Kan gives the following examples: walking when one's stomach is full of liquid will create pain in one's arms and legs, walking in a blustery wind will give rise to an itchy poison (*yangdu* 癢毒), prolonged sitting in a damp place will lead to partial paralysis (*ji pianku* 疾偏枯), and continuous sexual activity will produce madness of lust (*hunsang nübing* 昏喪女疾). The first case is something many of us have experienced and is simple common sense. When it comes the second case, the illness that Ruan Kan speaks of is more of a descriptive than an actual name. Since wind is the carrier of the one hundred diseases in traditional Chinese medicine, it not only causes dispersal of the body's breath but can lead to muscle twitches and spasms; however, what Ruan Kan most likely means by itchy poison is wind-induced sneezing. The third case is taken from the *Zhuangzi*: "If a man sleeps in a damp place, his back aches and he ends up half paralyzed."[4] Case four is also connected to the dispersal of breath as well as depletion of bodily essence (*jing* 精). Ruan Kan's argument is that if the aforementioned examples of physical danger are acceptable threats to a person's longevity, why are other equally dangerous activities, such as excavating graves and building residences, not taken as shortening one's lifespan too? To partake in one or more of the four cases that put a person's health at risk, yet search for a cure in others that also endanger their health, is to treat one disease by way of another.

The Shijing says: "Easy and self-possessed was our prince, seeking happiness by no crooked ways." Not avoiding slander in order to act with righteousness, the prince knew that winding ways could not be used to seek good fortune. Thus, those who are good at seeking longevity and strength concentrate their breath to become supple, reduce selfishness by making their desires few, and let their feelings and nature be directly moved by what is appropriate to them. In this way, they accord with the proper measure of nourishing life and obtain it by seeking it in what is internally embraced.

In contrast to those who are misguided in their effort to extend life and reap the benefits of good fortune, Ruan Kan cites the *Shijing*: "Easy and self-possessed was our prince, the fit recipient of blessing and dignity."[5]

As was the case with applying a cure to what lies outside of a patient, the prince similarly does not employ winding ways to secure good fortune. To be devious in one's methods is, for Ruan Kan, to be in violation of the norms governing human nature and fate, thus bringing disaster upon oneself. This is why persons who are capable of prolonging life do so by focusing on their breath to create a body that is supple (*rou* 柔). To have a supple body is to return to the form of a newborn child, a point raised in the *Daodejing*: "Rely exclusively on your vital force, and become perfectly soft: can you play the infant?"[6] This, however, is not enough; a person must also work to eliminate self-interest and desire, for these only invite personal injury and misfortune. The goal of doing so is to ensure a person's inborn nature and fate are unhindered or, in the imagery of the *Daodejing*, become an uncarved block: "Exemplify simplicity, embrace the uncarved block. Curtail self-interest, and have few desires."[7] In this way, the principle, or proper measure (*zhengdu* 正度) of nourishing life can be realized within, obviating the need to search for it in external things, including the kings of old who "straightforwardly put into practice the essential qualities of nature and fate so that their regulations and measures can be taken to constitute a standard for the myriad people."[8]

Section 2

There once was a person who knew nothing about silkworms such that whatever he said and did was out of superstition. The more he failed to get silk from the worms, the more his superstitions multiplied, as if he were personally committing a crime against them. After someone taught him about silkworms, he focused on the mulberry leaves, the fire and cold [to incubate them], and hot, dry, and damp [weather], such that his one hundred fears extinguished themselves and his profit rose tenfold. Why? At first, he did not know the self-so-ness of things, which led to the growth of feelings of superstition, but having learned about the self-so-ness of things, the arts he used to seek them were proper. Thus, superstitions are born from what is unknown, and if a person knows of human nature as they know of silkworms, superstitions will not be established. This is akin to people who eat too much and have indigestion. If they put aside the yellow pill and turn to divination and prayer to ask the spirits about the cause of their suffering, or seek blessings from the Hu,[9] the common people will laugh at them. Why? They use their wisdom to reach the conclusion that spirits are not the cause of disaster. Thus, superstitions are born from what is unknown, while speaking from what is known is akin to seeking blessings from the Hu.

Ruan Kan elaborates his theory that a person's fortune arises due to internal factors, not external agents, using the analogy of raising silkworms. For the person coming to this practice for the first time, hearsay and folklore will shape their initial thoughts and fuel their frustration

from repeatedly failing. Once a more appropriate form of knowledge is acquired, however, all fear and anxiety vanish. Just as humans have their inborn nature and fate, so too do silkworms; it is simply a matter of uncovering it. Thus, superstitions are born from what is unknown, such as setting aside the yellow pill (*huangwan* 黄丸) to treat indigestion, and resort to invocations for answers, or asking foreigners (*qihu* 乞胡) about how best to obtain good fortune because one's own attempts have not succeeded. At this stage in his essay, Ruan Kan is merely building momentum for his thesis that where a person resides has no bearing on the length of their life, an argument that commences in the next section.

Section 3

Suppose we take the residences of the three ministers and allow foolish people to live there; that they will not become one of the three ministers is knowable. Longevity and premature death can no more be sought than the precious and humble. To select a person's hundred-year palace, wish for the longevity of a child who dies early, or build a person's residence in opposition to the Hu or Kui [stars], is to speed after the premature death of Pengzu. These are certainly inopportune. Others may say that the foolish will not have a long life in the residence of a duke or marquis, thus there is no effect [on a person's life] by their residence. It is simply the natural result of their nature and fate, which cannot be sought.

Commencing his analysis of why a residence plays no part in the fortune of its residents, Ruan Kan offers the following example: let a fool live in the house of a noble and they will remain as ignorant as when they first entered. If the truth were otherwise, this would mean the physical structure of a residence magically elevates a person's fortune. Now it may turn out that with devotion and time, the fool can enter the rarefied world of the nobles, or it may be due to the intellectual or spiritual uplifting they receives from their surroundings. Regardless, there are so many other factors working for and against a person's fortunes that to declare everything is the result of geomancy seems rather dubious to Ruan Kan. Positioning a residence such that it is out of alignment with the Hu 弧 or Kui 魁[10] stars is seen as hastening one's death but this, like the short life of the fool who lives in the noble's home, is merely the natural path of their inborn nature and fate.

Section 4

If a thief is about to arrive but a person does not swiftly flee to a safe and isolated place, they run the risk of being held captive; however, if a person wants to avoid disaster and pursue blessings, nothing is better than going along with principle. When it comes to the principle of avoiding a thief, nothing compares to quickly fleeing. This is to have a

good outcome. When it comes to the ways of nourishing life, nothing compares to putting harmony first; if a person does so, everything will be covered. Avoiding a thief requires a person to be fast, this is obvious. Even people of middle intelligence can see this without any difficulty. However, the principle of avoiding disaster is obscure and even people with clarity will be hard-pressed to see it. As both are movements of principle, they cannot be longed for and so are identical. When Confucius fell ill his doctor said to him: "You reside in a comfortable place and eat pleasant food. Your illness is the work of heaven. What can I do to cure you?" Thus, to know fate is to be without anxiety, while tracing things to their origin yet returning to their end is to understand the axiom of life and death.

To properly prepare us for his discussion of divining a residence's fortune, Ruan Kan shows how eluding a thief involves the same motion of principle as avoiding disaster. The goal of the former is to avoid harm by spontaneously reacting to imminent danger, while the latter demands tracing things to their root to discover how we will arrive at their branches. Whether it is knowing the nature of a thief or a particular disaster obstructing one's good fortune, in the words of the *Guanzi*, "to adhere to the inherent order of things when making a move is to avoid jumping to conclusions."[11] This is the way to ensure a good outcome.

That the principle of avoiding a thief is premised on speed is obvious to everyone. However, when it comes to the principle of avoiding disaster, its obscurity (*mingming* 冥冥) means it is not obvious to everyone, including those with advanced intelligence. Where does this trait come from? According to the *Zhuangzi*, "the essence of the perfect Dao is deep and darkly shrouded; the extreme of the perfect Dao is mysterious and hushed in silence."[12] In other words, if the principle of avoiding disaster is tied to knowing the Dao, and given avoiding a thief is a subset of this principle, they are in fact the same principle.

To reinforce this idea, Ruan Kan recounts the story of when Confucius fell ill, his doctor bluntly told him it was the work of heaven and he could do nothing about it.[13] In following principle, one can accept their fate and be free of worry: "As he [the sage] rejoices in heaven and understands its decrees, he will be free from anxiety."[14] One can also harmonize with the inborn nature of things and "trace things back to their origins then turn back to their ends. Thus, we understand the axiom of life and death."[15] By grasping the principle of death and life, one can avoid the former and prolong the latter while simultaneously realizing that neither are influenced by the location of one's residence.

Section 5

As for times and days, and asking spirits about the cause of suffering, the grand kings of antiquity lacked them while later kings enjoyed

hearing about them. They established their longevity palaces yet met with premature death; they sought to have one hundred sons yet were left without any heirs. They divined to have their tombs remain sealed and their graves free of lodging grass. Why? Living in their high towers and deep palaces, they were separated from the cold and heat, wasting their lives on sex and richly flavored food, poisoning their essence, and losing the real by searching for it in the empty. Thus, their inborn nature and fate were left unsatisfied. Others say the masters whom they questioned were unskilled and being so, there are no skilled masters in the world. If a person keeps all of their chickens in one coop, and all of their sheep in one pen, whenever a guest arrives, some of them are bound to die. In what way were their residences different? Thus, fate has its formulations and to know fate is to be unobstructed by the vulgar. This is akin to Xu Fu using physiognomy to foretell the marquis of Tiao, or Ying Bu becoming king despite being branding as a criminal, Pengzu living to the age of seven hundred, or the premature death of a child. All of these are due to human nature and fate.

When Ruan Kan speaks of auspicious and inauspicious times (*shi* 時) and days (*ri* 日), we can interpret it in two ways: literally as specific times and days to divine (or those appearing during the act of divining), or they can be taken collectively to mean an auspicious season in which to carry out activities conducive to good fortune, or ones to be avoided so as not to incur misfortune. In fact, both of these meanings were used in ancient China, as evidenced by the following passage from the *Liji*:

> For the great (sacrificial) services there were (fixed) seasons and days; for the smaller services these were not fixed. They fixed them by divination (near the time). (In divining) about external affairs they used the odd days; and for internal affairs, the even. They did not go against the (intimations of the) tortoise-shell and stalks.[16]

Even the *Hanfeizi* spoke of the need to pay attention to auspicious times and dates: "If the ruler believes in date-selecting, worships devils and deities, believes in divination and lot-casting, and likes fetes and celebrations, then ruin is possible."[17]

Using this method of selecting moments that will reap the greatest benefit, the ancient kings set about constructing their longevity palaces (*shougong* 壽宮) but still suffered an early death; though they sought to have a bounty of heirs, they were left empty handed. From this, it is clear that their residences brought them no additional benefit. As if their attempts to secure good fortune while they were still alive was not enough, they called upon the spirits to protect their tombs from robbers and their grave mounds from being overrun with grass and weeds. This last point is especially egregious, as the *Liji* points out: "When the grass is old on the grave of a friend, we no (longer) wail for him."[18] The reason for this, according to

Ruan Kan, is that these kings lived a life that was removed from the hardship of the outside world (i.e., cold and heat) while harming themselves by engaging in too much sex and overindulging in rich food. This led to their essence being poisoned and their inborn nature being lost amongst the real things of the world (i.e., keeping life and knowing what causes disaster) as they sought it in those things that are empty (i.e., sex and rich food).

Others holding a different perspective say the fault does not lie with the king but with his unskilled diviner. To illustrate, Ruan Kan gives the example of a person who keeps their chickens and sheep in a restricted space, as opposed to letting them roam wild. Whenever a guest visits, one of the chicken or sheep will end up being served as dinner! How is it correct to say that the keeper of said animals is bound to kill one of them because of the location of their residence? Thus, the fate of chicken and sheep boils down to their ability to flee their captor. To claim otherwise is to believe that Xu Fu 許負 used physiognomy (*mianxiang* 面相) to foretell Zhou Yafu 周亞夫 would become marquis of Tiao 條侯,[19] or that Ying Bu 英布 would be king despite being previously branded a criminal.[20] In each case, the deciding factor was the person's inborn nature and fate, nothing more.

To perform physiognomy on a person's residence and use this information to choose where to live, believing moving from east to west is enough, is to merely extinguish what is appropriate to human nature and fate. Thus, Confucius ascended East Mountain and the state of Lu seemed small; however, when he ascended Mount Tai the whole world seemed small.[21] *Standing on a high hill to observe people's residences, one can know that east and west are unrelated to disaster or blessings. If a person forgets that a site should be bright and high, and has a heart-mind that is obstructed by screens and walls, then all that is seen will be increasingly cramped. To observe it using intelligence, Qian the unyielding shows us how easy it is, while Kun the yielding shows us how simple it is.*[22] *If heaven and earth are easy and simple but a person fears them for being fine and exacting, this is to disobey them even more. In this way, the gentleman esteems the clarity of heaven and examines the affairs of earth.*

If geomancy proves insufficient to locate an auspicious place to build a residence, another method is physiognomy. The problem with using a person's face to determine the orientation and location of their residence is that it ignores, even extinguishes, what is appropriate to human nature and fate, which is why Ruan Kan cited the example from the *Mengzi* of Confucius climbing the East Mountain (*Dongshan* 東山) and the Tai Mountain (*Taishan* 泰山).[23] Ascending the former, the state of Lu 魯 seemed small, however, upon reaching the top of Mount Tai, the entire world appeared tiny. This higher and clearer perspective is, of course, a metaphor for the outlook of the sage. The more comprehensive a person understands human nature and fate, the more difficult it will be to convince them that good and bad fortune can be found anywhere other than

in human nature and fate. In order to strengthen his case, Ruan Kan repeats the *Yijing*'s statement that *Qian* 乾 (heaven) and *Kun* 坤 (earth) are easy and simple, and as such, the gentleman esteems the former's clarity while using the latter to examine the affairs of the world.

Section 6

Of the skilled masters of the world, if they divine a completed house, they will have proof of its fortune; if they construct a new one, there is no evidence. If the people of the world frequently divine an old residence, they will use this to justify constructing a new one. This is akin to seeing a boat moving on water but wanting to push it on land; it is an unclear plan. The principles of old and new are similar to divination by shell and stalks. To bore holes in a tortoise shell and count yarrow stalks is to know what is auspicious and inauspicious, however, a person cannot make things so. Why? A person can know what is auspicious and inauspicious but they cannot make things become so. If a person first divines an auspicious hexagram but later resides in a place without any blessings, this is akin to first building a beneficial residence only to dwell in it without any reciprocation. If a person can divine an old residence in order to see why the spirits cause them to suffer, but they cannot do so if they want to seek blessings for a new residence, this resembles what was said about divination by shell and stalks.

With this section of his essay, we are finally presented with Ruan Kan's argument pertaining to the divination of a residence. To begin, skilled diviners can readily know the fortune of an existing structure from the proof that is its history. Previous occupants and neighbors can testify to the blessings or lack thereof of the property, and offer theories as to the cause. However, no such evidence exists for a newly constructed place. Being aware of potential hazards is, of course, an important aspect of divining a residence, as the *Mengzi* notes: "Mencius went to see king Xuan of Qi. He said, 'If one is going to build a hall, one will surely ask the master carpenter to obtain large trees.'"[24] Wang Chong's *Lunheng* also tells us that "the experts in the various arts and professions, in explaining omens, specify the different cases."[25] This being so, Ruan Kan writes, when the people of the world divine an existing residence, they become accustomed to doing so and apply these methods to the construction of a new one. The problem with this is that the former method is an already established one whereas the latter lacks any credible basis. Borrowing the analogy from the *Zhuangzi*, Ruan Kan states that this is no different from seeing a boat move on water and then trying to push it on land:

> Nothing is as good as a boat for crossing water, nothing as good as a cart for crossing land. But although a boat will get you over water, if

you try to push it across land, you may push till your dying day and hardly move it any distance at all.[26]

Rowing a boat on water versus pushing it across land nicely represents the two views prevalent in ancient China on divination. On the one hand, there are those who find them useful; on the other hand, there are those who find them useless. On the one hand, there are those who are skilled at divining; on the other hand, there are those who are incompetent when it comes to such matters. While the tools of divination consist of tortoise shells (*bu* 卜) and yarrow stalks (*shi* 筮), knowing their intended purpose does not translate into the reality reflecting it, despite the efforts of ancient kings to convince people otherwise. On the tools of divination, the *Liji* writes:

> Divination by the shell is called *bu*; by the stalks, *shi*. The two were the methods by which the ancient sage kings made the people believe in seasons and days, revere spiritual beings, stand in awe of their laws and orders.[27]

On using divination to influence the outcome of an event, the *Hanfeizi* states: "It was Zhao that, after boring the tortoise-shell, counting the bamboo slips, and finding the omen saying, "great luck" attacked Yan."[28] What this means is that anyone who first casts an auspicious divination and builds a residence to capture such good fortune, is bound to come up empty-handed. Conversely, to divine an existing residence purely to discover why its fortune is inauspicious is bound to produce results that are beneficial to all.

Section 7

The common people cut clothes and plant crops by selecting an auspicious day; those who make clothes like this will be injured by the cold and those who plant like this will lose the time of dampness. When Mars moves westward at the arrival of winter, clothes must be given out. When the seasonal rains have fallen, seeds must be planted. When a thief is about to arrive, a person must immediately flee. When a person abandons the true and tends to false, the three worries appear. Whichever family is governed by superstition, although they seek wealth, they will end up poor. Hence there is the proverb: "He who knows the constellations will not have clothes to wear." The words of the ancients are not false and so we must examine them.

Ruan Kan concludes his essay on a lighthearted note. Observing how ancient tailors would select auspicious days to makes clothes, just as farmers choose the time and day to plant their seeds, Ruan Kan surely would have had the following passage from the *Lunheng* in mind when

writing this: "There are books for tailors, giving auspicious and inauspicious times. Dresses, made on an inauspicious day, bring misfortune, made on a lucky day, they attract happiness."[29] To follow such practices, however, would mean that the clothes-maker and farmer alike would fail to acquire good fortune when the timeframe in which they act is not conducive to their success.

Thus, when Mars (*huoliu* 火流) moves westward in the sky, this marks the start of winter and the dispensing of warm clothing. As for the planting of seeds and escaping from a thief, both require well-timed responses. To reject the reality of these situations and falsely believe they are dictated by fate is to invite their respective forms of disaster. Furthermore, to manage the affairs of one's family using superstition is to guarantee they become destitute even though what is being sought are blessings and wealth. Ruan Kan then offers us a proverb of his own devising—"He who knows the constellations will not have clothes to wear 有知星宿，衣不覆之諺"—before ending his essay with this succinct observation: the ancients spoke the truth and we would do well to study their words.

Rebuttal to Residences Are Not Auspicious or Inauspicious, One Must Assist Life 難宅無吉凶攝生論

by Ji Kang

Section 1

With the gods so distant, it is difficult to clarify what is auspicious and inauspicious. Although men of middle intelligence exhaust themselves trying, and fail to acquire the main thread, this shows how easy it is to be baffled by the Dao. Thus, Confucius did not reply when asked about the end [of things], remaining cautious and silent on matters concerning spirits and the strange. It is for this reason that the ancients showed benevolence to things, yet hid how to be so within themselves knowing it could not be shared with the masses. They did not purposely hide it but knew the masses would not clearly grasp it. I have no interest in discussing this matter, but you and your opinionated heart-mind and shallow views are resolute and without any doubts. Being decidedly attached like this is enough to be dictatorial. I have considered your essay and there are many claims I do not comprehend. Thus, I will sincerely follow your words to create this rebuttal.

To set the tone for his rebuttal,[30] Ji Kang immediately connects human fate with the reality of spirits, arguing that the remoteness of the latter makes it difficult to grasp the former. What is more, spirits are not merely distant, they belong to the reality of the Dao, meaning even "middle persons" (*zhongren* 中人, i.e., a person of middle intelligence) will fail to grasp their principle. To reinforce the notion that spirits are

both profound and ultimately unknowable, Ji Kang refers to the unwillingness of Confucius to consult them:

> Zilu [Jilu] asked about serving ghosts and spirits. The Master said: You are not yet able to serve people—how could you be able to serve ghosts and spirits? May I inquire about death? You do not yet understand life—how could you possibly understand death?[31]

If Confucius felt uneasy about spirits, those who preceded him were not; however, the ancients were persons of benevolence yet kept the thread of the Dao to themselves to avoid confusing the common people. Ji Kang's notion would appear to be derived from the *Yijing*—"[The Dao is] manifested in benevolence and hidden within its functioning"[32]—while embodying the principle of this passage from the *Zhuangzi*: "So the man who would preserve his body and life must think only of how to hide himself away, not minding how remote or secluded the spot may be."[33] In other words, the ancients looked out for themselves by looking out for others, and taught others by not sharing with them what they did not need to know. And yet, Ruan Kan seems so set in his thinking that Ji Kang has no choice but to lay before him the hidden methods of spirits and the Dao.

Section 2

Deducing the direction of a residence from metal and wood, a person will never know where to locate it as there are no good methods for doing so. The world has no way of knowing natural principles, and amongst the various methods known, none are especially good techniques. Thus, to not be such a person means the Dao will not operate in vain. Rites and music, governance and punishment, and matters out of the ordinary, all have that which is unfamiliar. How much more so will this be the case for what is hidden and profound? If a person indulges their desire to distinguish and clarify the spiritual and profound by dispelling confusion and the rise of obstruction, thereby establishing the beginning of things to clarify the causes [of their suffering] while examining things in order to confirm what is essential, they will believe they have the proof. If a person simply mentions the foolish multitude, or those who do not know about silkworm eggs, angrily rejecting them and causing them to declare Yin and Yang and auspicious and inauspicious fate are without principle, is this not similar to the choking person who blames the kernel of grain, or the drowning person who blames the boat and oars?

In order to understand why Ji Kang refers to metal and wood, two of the five elements (*wuxing* 五行), when it comes to determining the orientation of a residence, we must turn to the *Lunheng*:

> The theory of drawing plans of houses enjoins that the doors of a house of a family with a Shang surname should not face the south,

> and that the doors of a house belonging to a family with a Zheng surname should not be turned to the north. For Shang corresponds to metal, and the south, to fire; Zheng is equal to fire, and the north, to water. Water conquers fire, and fire injures metal. The fluids [*qi*] of the five elements may be hostile, wherefore, in the dwellings of families with the five classes of surnames, the doors should have their proper bearings.[34]

Given the profound nature of the five elements and their connection to the Dao, only the wisest of the ancients knew their principles and how best to enact them. Had the sages of old allowed the common people to randomly employ the natural principles of the five elements, the Dao would be operating in vain. Indeed, this notion was expressed as early as the *Yijing*:

> As a book, the *Changes* is something that cannot be kept at a distance. As a manifestation of the Dao the *Changes* involves frequent shifts … but if one is not such a person, the Dao will not operate in vain.[35]

Unlike rituals and music, statecraft and penal law, all of which are straightforward to justify, those who attempt to elucidate spirits and the Dao, believing doing so will rid everyone else of their misunderstandings, will fail to secure any benefit. And yet, they continuously seek in them the source of their misfortune, thinking this is all the proof they need. However, in openly dismissing Yin and Yang and auspicious and inauspicious fate as lacking principle, what they are actually dismissing are the manifestations of these phenomenon, not the phenomenon themselves. In other words, these people are akin to those who in the midst of choking, blames the kernel of grain, or the person who is drowning blaming the boat and oars.

Section 3

Your essay said: The hundred-year palace cannot prolong the life of a child that dies early, and building a person's residence in opposition to the Hu or Kui cannot make Pengzu die prematurely. You also said: Xu Fu's using physiognomy to foretell the marquis of Tiao and Ying Bu's becoming king despite being branded a criminal, these are due to human nature and fate. Replying to this I would say: This is to take fate as being determined, longevity as having its place, disaster as being unable to use wisdom to flee, and blessings being unable to use effort to produce results. Ying Bu feared pain yet he died at the hands of a knife and saw; Yafu hated hunger yet he met his end with starvation. Of the myriad things and affairs of the world, each encounter is nothing more than the physiognomy of fate. As such, how were people's fates equally long in the times of Tang and Yu? How were the soldier's fates equally short at Changping?

Referring to Section 3 of Ruan Kan's essay, Ji Kang lays forth the central argument of his rebuttal: constructing a residence whose sole purpose is to bestow blessings on the occupant will still prove incapable of extending the life of a child fated to die prematurely; conversely, constructing a residence whose location or orientation has been deemed by others to be a curse will still prove incapable of accelerating the death of a person fated to live a long life. What is more, Ji Kang rebuffs the claim made in Section 5 of Ruan Kan's essay that physiognomy foretold the auspicious future of the marquis of Tiao and Ying Bu. His reasons for doing so are this: Ruan Kan erroneously portrays fate as predetermined, longevity as pre-situated, disaster as rendering wisdom impotent, and blessings as incapable of deliberating producing results.

Thus, while Ying Bu was terrified of pain, fate would see him die via stabs and cuts; Zhou Yafu might have been terrified of hunger, but fate saw him die of starvation. Based on this, Ji Kang asks: If people's lives are simply the tabulation of events knowable to physiognomy, why did everyone enjoy a long life in the times of Tang 唐 and Yu 虞, and a short life at Changping 長平 after the state of Zhao 趙 fell to Qin? This particular event is not elaborated upon by Ji Kang but we are told of it in the *Lunheng*:

> Those who deny the existence of destiny refer to the city of Liyang which sunk into a lake in one night, and to Baiqi, a general of Qin, who buried alive the troops of Zhao after their submission below Changping, altogether four hundred thousand men, who all died at the same time … If there really should be destiny, how is it, they ask, that in Qin all were involved in the same catastrophe?[36]

This is where I have doubts. If things are as you say, then even if you were as cautious as Zeng or Yan, you would not avoid disaster; even if you were as evil as Jie or Zhi, you would enjoy flourishing and splendor. If auspicious and inauspicious fate are predetermined and cannot be diverted, then why did the ancients say: "A family that accumulates goodness will be sure to have an excess of blessings; such a one treads the Dao of trustworthiness and keep his thoughts in accord [with heaven]?" If a person must first accumulate goodness before they have blessings and manifest sincerity before divine aid comes, then this is akin to a crime inviting the punishment, or success bringing the reward. To first accumulate goodness and then receive a reward is due to the principle of that affair, not because one has had a profound encounter with it. If you proclaim this is all physiognomy, you are merely determining the physiognomy of a thing by its conduct, or fixing auspicious and inauspicious fate by a thing's knowledge and effort. This is, unfortunately, not the opinion of this essay and is something about which I also have doubts.

The aforementioned outlines Ji Kang's doubts when it comes to Ruan Kan's reasoning. If, Ji Kang says, life is fated in such a manner, there

would be no point in living as cautiously as Zengzi 曾子 or Yan Hui 顏回, two of Confucius' favorite disciples. Praise for these two men is not only found in the *Lunyu* and *Mengzi*, but the *Lunheng* too:

> Provided that there were a moralist now more profound than either Confucius or Mo Di, yet his name would not rank as high as theirs, and, if in his conduct he should surpass even Zengzi and Yan Hui, he would not be as famous as they.[37]

Whether a person is blessed like Zeng and Yan, or damned like emperor Jie of the Xia dynasty, or robber Zhi from the *Zhuangzi*, to argue as does Ruan Kan that fate is fixed and unalterable, why, Ji Kang muses, does the *Yijing* say the family whose goodness is plentiful will enjoy an abundance of blessings,[38] and the person who is trustworthy has thoughts that accord with heaven?[39] To argue otherwise is to believe a crime invites its punishment and success brings its own reward. Such thinking purports that physiognomy is defined by the acts of the subject while fate is influenced by the subject's knowledge and effort. For Ji Kang, this is simply untrue.

You also said: People who eat too much and have indigestion must take the yellow pill. If it is a person's fate that they should naturally live long, what fear do they have of eating so much that they must also take good medicine? If you say that taking medicine agrees with a person's physiognomy, then how is a residence not in agreement too? To say that even though fate resembles what must be, yet still requires medicine to help it succeed, how do you know that physiognomy does not also require residence to complement it? To say that medicine can be discussed but residence cannot, I am afraid there are people in the world who discuss it. You also said that longevity and premature death can no more be sought than the precious and humble; you further said those who are good at seeking longevity and strength must first know where premature death and disease come from before their arrival can be prevented. This being so, can longevity and premature death actually be sought? Or can they not be sought?

Moving on, Ji Kang continues to refute statements made by Ruan Kan, the first of which is from Section 2 of his essay and involves people taking medicine for their indigestion. Ji Kang's argument is that we should be well aware of the repercussions of overindulging in rich food or wine. In his essay *On Nourishing Life*, he spoke of how this temptation could give rise to any of the one hundred diseases and shorten their lifespan. Here, however, the emphasis is on fate. Whether a person eats too little or too much, their fate will run its course regardless. The same holds true for one's place of residence; it may assist one's good fortune, just as having a well-balanced diet may assist one's longevity, but neither residence nor diet are directly responsible for deciding one's fate. The second claim Ji

Kang objects to was made in Section 3 of Ruan's essay, while the third claim appears in Section 1. Both of these deal with the issue of longevity and premature death and the ability of divination to predict them.

You said that Pengzu's living to seven hundred years and the premature death of a child are due to human nature and fate. You also said that if a person does not know how to prevent a disease's arrival but wants the result to be long life and the expulsion of premature death, this is to seek the real in the empty. Thus, human nature and fate are left unsatisfied. This is to also say that the arrival of long life or premature death stems from how a person uses their body, while the satisfaction of human nature and fate are acquired in seeking what is good. Why should we not call the person who dies early foolish? Why should we not call the person whose prolongs long life wise? If longevity and premature death reach completion in the foolish and wise, why should we employ the fate that is natural and the discourse that cannot be sought? These are the contradictory claims of your edifying remarks.

Ruan Kan's discussion of longevity and premature death was also discussed in Section 5 of his essay, and Ji Kang offers his objections here. Whereas Ruan Kan declares the longevity of Pengzu and the brevity of the deceased child to be the result of their nature and fate, and those who do not actively prevent disease from taking hold of their body while expecting a long life, such persons, for Ji Kang, are merely searching for the real in what is empty (*qiu shi yu xu* 求實於虛). Why is this? Bodily illness is very much real, as is our ability to avoid or recover from it; what is not real, however, is the expectation that a person who abuses their body can enjoy the same longevity as one who is attentive towards it. The same holds true for our nature and fate; testing our limits and deliberately endangering ourselves can only jeopardize our fate, not satisfy it. Seeking what nourishes life and benefits our spirit is how we ensure our body fulfills its lifespan, but doing the opposite imperils it. If only fools die early and the wise have extended lives, what need is there, Ji Kang asks, for living naturally and following the Dao? Ruan Kan has failed to consider the role of harmony and the always changing manifestations of Yin and Yang.

Section 4

Your essay said: Those who concentrate their breath to become supple, who reduce their selfishness and make few their desires, will allow their feelings and nature to be moved by what is appropriate to them. In doing so, they accord with the proper measure of nourishing life and seek it in what is internally embraced in order to acquire it. You also said: For those good at nourishing life, nothing surpasses the coverage of harmony. These words are so true! How can I say they are otherwise? I would only say they do not exhaust the entirety of life. Not entering a

state that is endangered is to avoid injury from chaotic governance, and having the gates doubled and the watchmen's clappers struck is to prepare for violent disaster. Thus, where a person resides must be bright and high in order to keep afar the suffering brought on by poisonous winds.

Referring to Section 1 of Ruan Kan's essay, Ji Kang praises his observations on the need to concentrate breath and reduce self-interested thoughts to allow feelings and the inborn nature to react in a more fitting and natural manner. For Ruan Kan, and to which Ji Kang wholeheartedly agrees, this translates into an accordance with the correct measure of nourishing life, and to do so by using what is internally inherent in us instead of seeking it in the external world. We do this by way of harmony, and yet the issue Ji Kang has with Ruan Kan's formulation is that it does not exhaust life in its entirety. He elaborates by quoting the *Lunyu*: "Do not enter a state that is endangered, and do not reside in a state that is disordered."[40] Not only this, but in the words of the *Yijing*, "having the gates doubled and the watchmen's clappers struck" (*zhongmen jituo* 重門擊柝)[41] is to prepare for any disaster that might come one's way.

Among those external things able to injury us, this is not enough to exhaust their numbers. From where can a person embrace this single harmony in order to exhaust all that needs to be done? When it comes to concentrating quietude and making desires few, none are comparable to Shan Bao who, at the age of seventy, still had the looks of a child. We can say this was because he employed a yielding harmony. However, on one particular morning he was eaten by a tiger. How was this not due to his reliance on the internal while ignoring the external? If we say that Shan Bao's physiognomy correctly predicted he would be eaten by a tiger, although his wisdom did not help him avoid it, what is the benefit of reducing one's desires? Yet you still say that by nourishing life one can attain it? If Shan Bao had this disastrous result by not exhausting goodness, then the way to assist life does not stop with single harmony. If harmony is not enough to protect life, then the suffering caused by external things is something that I do not know how to overcome.

Even if, as Ji Kang says above, a person selects a residence that is bright and high to avoid the harmful effects of poisonous winds, it will not stop every harmful thing from reaching them. So where is the harmony Ruan Kan spoke of and how are we to embrace it in order to provide us with a long and auspicious life? First, Ji Kang says, a person needs to concentrate their quietude and reduce their desires. Shan Bao was regarded as the epitome of this practice. The description of Shan Bao that Ji Kang uses is derived from the following account in the *Zhuangzi*:

> In Lu there was Shan Bao—he lived among the cliffs, drank only water, and didn't go after gain like other people. He went along like that

> for seventy years and still had the complexion of a little child. Unfortunately, he met a hungry tiger who killed him and ate him up.[42]

Ji Kang states that Shan Bao's fate to fall victim to a tiger was because he relied on the internal and ignored the external. In fact, this assessment is also from the *Zhuangzi*: "Shan Bao looked after what was on the inside and the tiger ate up his outside."[43] Ji Kang mocks Ruan Kan's argument that physiognomy could have predicted Shan Bao's fate by pointing out that the latter's wisdom did not help him avoid the tiger, so what was the point of Shan Bao reducing his desires? Meeting the tiger as he did, Shan Bao clearly did not exhaust the goodness of nourishing life, thus the singular harmony Ruan Kan speaks of is not what is needed to prolong life. Unless one can protect life by stopping the suffering caused by external things, life will always come to a premature end.

Section 5

Your essay said: Of the skilled masters of the world, if they divine a completed house, they will have proof; if they construct a new one, they will have no evidence. May I ask, to divine a completed house and have proof, are only the walls and rooms divined? Or are the auspicious and inauspicious fate of the residents divined too? If the residents are divined and one can [subsequently] know their prosperity and decline, this is the outcome of divining people, not a completed house. To divine a completed house and know its auspicious and inauspicious fate indicates that the residence itself has good and evil; the residents are merely following it. Thus, a person who divines observes what is on the surface to acquire what lies within. If a residence can regulate people and have them follow it, then a person with an auspicious fate will meet with disaster in a residence whose fate is inauspicious; conversely, the person that is evil and tyrannical will receive blessings in a residence whose fate is auspicious. Are you saying an auspicious or inauspicious fate is simply the result of a person's residence? Alternatively, is the result simply that a new residence lacks evidence? If auspicious or inauspicious fate are without doubt the result of people, then although one may have a completed house, how can you say there is proof? How can it subsequently be divined? Or is it not able to be divined? Is there any influence from a residence? Or is there no influence from a residence?

Having established the grounds for his critique of Ruan Kan, Ji Kang proceeds to his discussion of divining a residence. Referring to Section 6 of Ruan Kan's essay—skilled masters who divine a completed house will have proof of its fate whereas a newly constructed one will not—Ji Kang interrogates Ruan Kan by asking whether it is the walls and rooms of the house that serve as the evidence, or is this shown by the residents themselves? If the latter, then a residence has no bearing on the fate of

its occupants. In other words, divining the fate of an existing house as a means to discuss the fate of its residents only reveals that the latter is in accord with the former. The good or bad fortune of a residence thus belongs to it alone regardless of who occupies it. Thus, Ji Kang writes, the diviner observes what is on the surface to acquire what lies within. However, this is not to say that a person's fate can be manipulated by the fortune of their dwelling, and the rhetorical questions Ji Kang poses at the end of this section shows how overly simplistic Ruan Kan's argument appears to him.

Section 6

Your essay said: Building a residence is like divination by shell and stalks in that auspicious and inauspicious fate can be known, however, things cannot be made auspicious or inauspicious. My response is this: they are similar but not the same. There is no advanced sign when divining by shell of auspicious or inauspicious fate, yet if a thing responds after being encountered, this is taken as an omen of the future. To perform physiognomy on a residence requires no questions about which residents are worthy and foolish, only observing what is already present to make sure nothing shifts and their forms are already complete. It is akin to observing a dragon face and know it will result in nobleness, or seeing the vertical order [of a person's wrinkles] and know they will result in starvation. Thus, each of these things has their cause and neither should be taken as existing in profoundness. If you see them as being equal in acquiring auspicious or inauspicious fate, and this causes you to say physiognomy of a residence and divination by shell are no different, this is akin to seeing a se and calling it a konghou, which shows the se is not the only thing you do not know. Even if you say performing physiognomy of a residence and divining by shell are the same, this merely shows that we can know them, not that we can make them. When auspicious and inauspicious fate are already complete, although you might know them, what good is it? To divine by shell or not, neither play a role in determining what results.

Here, Ji Kang takes issue with Ruan Kan's claim that building a residence is equivalent to the traditional methods of divination (i.e., tortoise shell and yarrow stalks), insofar as both methods can reveal the auspicious or inauspicious, but neither can produce said fate. Ji Kang's reply is that there are no advanced signs to assist the diviner in predicting an auspicious or inauspicious future, yet the oracle (or shaman) uses the response of things during the act of divining as indicators of said future. Physiognomy, on the other hand, is not impacted by the moral standing of its subjects since it observes external and already existent forms. Ji Kang thus says physiognomy is no different from observing a dragon face

(*longyan* 龍顏)[44] and knowing it will have a royal future, or observing the wrinkles around a person's mouth (*zongli* 縱理)[45] and knowing they will succumb to starvation. For Ruan Kan to say it makes no difference to a residence whether a diviner uses physiognomy or tortoise shell is, in Ji Kang's mind, akin to seeing a *se* 瑟 and calling it a *konghou* 箜篌.[46] In the end, whether a person divines by shell or not has no bearing on their fate.

When the ancients were about to act, they would say one must first ask the tortoise shell and yarrow stalks if the outcome was going to auspicious or not, thereby determining what actions should be taken. How was this in vain? Of this I also have doubts. When king Wu was building the Zhou dynasty, it was said he examined and divined [beforehand], and established his residence in the capital of Hao. When the duke of Zhou moved the capital, he divined the Jian and Chan rivers but ultimately chose the Luo river as a good place. You also said: Divination is used to determine the proper location [of a grave] so that the body will be interred in peace. The ancients performed this in the past but you are refuting it in the present. I do not know who I can follow with certainty.

Having just said divination by shell or stalks could not change the fate of the subject being divined, Ji Kang is reluctant to say the ancients used these methods in vain. How could he when king Wu of the Zhou dynasty used divination to locate his residence in the capital of Hao 鎬,[47] or when the duke of Zhou wanted to relocate the capital, the diviners chose a site between the Jian 澗 and Chan 瀍 rivers but the duke settled on the Luo 洛 river? Against Ruan Kan's statement that divination is used to determine the proper location of a person's grave in order that their body may be laid to rest in peace,[48] Ji Kang is not rejecting the performance of the ancients but Ruan Kan's dismissal of them.

Section 7

Your essay said: Suppose we take the residences of the three high ministers and allow foolish people to reside there; that these foolish people will not become one of the three high ministers is certainly knowable. You also said the foolish person will not have a long life in the residence of a duke or marquis, thus a residence really has no effect [on longevity]. My response is: I am not saying an auspicious residence can result in blessings on its own but that the gentleman, in having virtue and talent, can divine where to live. Since he follows etiquette and accumulates virtue, he enjoys great auspiciousness. This is akin to the good farmer who carries good abilities in his breast and selects fertile fields but adds to them weeding and hoeing, hence he is rewarded with a full granary. By seeing how foolish people cannot acquire blessings from an auspicious residence yet saying residences are without good or evil, how is this

different from saying planting fields will not result in an abundant crop or that fields lack rich or thin soil? A good field, although fine, does not by itself produce luxuriant crops; a residence that is divined by stalks, although auspicious, does not by itself produce complete results.

Quoting Section 3 of Ruan Kan's essay, that to allow fools to live in the homes of the three high ministers will not transform them into high ministers, nor will they acquire the longevity of the duke or marquis living there, Ji Kang explains that an auspicious residence may very well have its benefits but in the case of the gentleman, his auspiciousness is the result of following etiquette and accumulating virtue. Ji Kang then uses the analogy of a farmer and his land: just as a residence contains the potential to yield good fortune so long as its occupant can secure it, so too does the good farmer apply his skills in weeding and hoeing to maximize the potential of the soil. Said differently, the good field does not result in a rich harvest on its own, just as the auspicious residence does not produce high social status on its own.

When the principle of mutual need is sincere, the auspicious or inauspicious fate of a residence cannot be doubted. To trust in signs and omens is to discard the principles that people find appropriate. To protect divination by shell and physiognomy is to sever the auspicious and inauspicious fate of Yin and Yang. To rely on knowledge and strength is to forget all that exists because of the heavenly Dao. How is this different from recognizing that things are born from the seasonal rains but you continue to occupy yourself with doing nothing, hoping for an abundant crop? Doubtful and strange discourses hence arise and biased opinions flourish, but given what they rely on are not same, how can they communicate with each other? If someone connects and improves them, would not half of their concern be about their residence and grave?

In light of the above, Ji Kang finally outlines his naturalistic cosmology of fate. To protect divination by shell and physiognomy is to sever the auspicious and inauspicious fate of Yin and Yang; to rely on knowledge and strength is to forget all that exists because of the heavenly Dao. The farmer knows his crops depend upon on the seasonal rains, but if he does nothing yet believes he will have a successful crop, how can he not turn to doubtful and strange theories to explain his failings? He would be better served by examining these discourses and applying the principles he discovers to understand the dynamics of a good or bad residence.

Section 8

Your essay said: As for times and days, and [asking spirits about] the cause of suffering, the grand kings of antiquity lacked them while later kings enjoyed hearing about them. These words are good but looking

back at them, they are not fully so. If Tang prayed in a mulberry grove and the duke of Zhou grasped a jade tablet, how do I know if they were asking the spirits about the causes of suffering? When the auspicious day is the fifth heavenly stem and we have already sacrificed and prayed to the ruler of horses, how do I know if these were [auspicious] times and days? Such are the affairs of your family, the positions of your former teachers, and in one morning you turn your back on them as if Tang and Zhou were not great kings. I hope to examine this in more detail. You must also check your knowledge of these two worthies and ask how they are in any way like yourself?

In Section 5 of his essay, Ruan Kan said: "As for times and days, and [asking spirits about] the cause of suffering, the grand kings of antiquity lacked them while later kings enjoyed hearing about them." Ji Kang agrees with this account on the surface but believes there is more to the matter. He seems skeptical that Tang praying in a mulberry grove (*sanglin* 桑林) and the duke of Zhou holding a jade tablet (*binggui* 秉圭) qualifies as proof of their communicating with the spirits. Similarly, if an auspicious day aligns with the fifth heavenly stem (*wu* 戊) or sacrifices and prayers are made to the ruler of horses (i.e., Bo 伯),[49] that this alone is evidence of these times and days being auspicious. The evidence for Ruan Kan's stance can be found in the affairs of his family and the positions held by his teachers, both of which he has dismissed, leaving Ji Kang quite mystified as to the reason why.

Section 9

Your essay said: When a thief is about to arrive, one must immediately flee; people who eat too much and then have indigestion must take the yellow pill. You only know these are more worthy than being idle for a moment or seeking the Hu. You do not know to overpower a thief or illness while they are still formless, while the outcome of such matters is secluded and yet to tumble down. If a person wants to stop fire they use water. Although you add more wood to the fire, you do not know to first bend the chimney. How much truer this will be for those profound matters, for words that cannot reach and numbers that cannot divide. This is why the ancients preserved and did not discuss them, clarified their spirit, and satisfied their knowledge of things to come. Thus, they alone were able to observe things prior to their myriad transformations and gather their outcomes after the great accord. The common people say this is natural but do not know why it is so. As such, how could common reason ever seize it?

In this final section of Ji Kang's rebuttal, he begins by referring to Ruan Kan's remarks that a person must flee when a thief is about to arrive (Section 7), and that a person takes the yellow pill to cure indigestion (Section 3). Ji Kang's opinion is that Ruan Kan does not know

whether he can overpower the thief or the illness while they are still formless and the outcome is still hidden. How are we to do this? Reading the *Huainanzi*, we see that "a doctor constantly treats illnesses that are not [yet] illnesses, thus he prevents illnesses."[50] Ruan Kan, Ji Kang says, appears to be a person who adds wood to a fire without first bending the chimney! We can only imagine what he would do if asked to respond to those profound matters (*weishi* 微事) where words cannot reach (*yan suo buneng ji* 言所不能及) and numbers cannot divide (*shu suo buneng fen* 數所不能分). Thus, the ancients preserved but did not discuss such things, a practice nicely voiced in the *Zhuangzi*: "As to what is beyond the six realms, the sage admits it exists but does not theorize."[51]

Ji Kang's reference to the sage clarifying his spirit was modeled after the *Yijing*—"To be aware of the numinous and bring it to light is dependent on the men involved"[52]—while observing things prior to their myriad changes is based on the *Zhuangzi*: "The ten thousand transformations continue without even the beginning of an end."[53] Such being the case, the common people take this as natural but they do not understand the reasons why. On not knowing why things are as they are, the *Daodejing* says: "When success is had and the task accomplished, the common folk all say, 'we just live naturally.'"[54] The *Huainanzi* also echoes this sentiment: "If the people yield to one another and compete to dwell humbly … daily transformed by their superiors and moved to goodness without realizing the means by which they came to be so, this is the root of government."[55]

Though forms and images have been made clear their numbers are still limited, while heaven and earth are broad and distant and contain many things and places; however, all that wisdom knows cannot come close to all that it does not know. You want to keep these techniques to avoid thieves and assist your digestion, saying this already satisfies life's nourishment and exhausts the ultimate principle. Your heart-mind gallops to observe the extreme of things and having done so, it returns. Whatever your ideas cannot reach you say does not exist. According to what you see, you wish to determine what the ancients had difficultly speaking about. Is this not akin to a cicada discussing ice? According to what you understand, you wish to judge what the ancients abandoned. Is this not akin to the Rong inquiring about Chinese cotton but having seen the hemp seeds, felt they could not be taken seriously? I am too much of a coward to arbitrarily act on this. On the one hand, I dare not use divination by shell or physiognomy to determine disaster and blessings; on other hand, I dare not say a person's family is without auspicious or inauspicious fate.

Despite the common people not knowing why things change, the number of forms and images made clear are limited. The *Yijing* tells us why: "In heaven this process creates images, and on earth it creates physical forms; this is how change and transformation manifest themselves."[56]

For Ji Kang, heaven and earth are so vast and profound, containing innumerable things and places, it is not possible for the common people to comprehend them, let alone the auspicious fate they may or may not have, hence what wisdom knows pales in comparison to what it does not know. This reflects what the *Zhuangzi* wrote: "Calculate what man knows, and it cannot compare with what he does not know."[57] To relate these arguments back to what Ruan Kan said, Ji Kang observes how he wishes to maintain a level of ignorance (i.e., fleeing from a thief or taking medicine to cure illness) rather than investigate the underlying causes because for Ruan Kan, nourishing life and exhausting the ultimate principle consists in pursuing what exists, not the non-existent.

The difficulty with Ruan Kan's approach is that he uses the methods of the ancients without grasping what grounds said practices. He wishes to give voice to what the ancients themselves could not speak of, yet this is akin to a cicada discussing ice (*huigu zhi yi bing* 蟪蛄之議冰). Ji Kang's colorful insult is not of his own devising but comes from the *Zhuangzi*: "You can't discuss ice with a summer insect—he's bound to a single season."[58] Not only is Ruan Kan mixing two standards of knowledge, he has the audacity to judge what the ancients abandoned. For Ji Kang, this resembles the Rong people 戎人[59] asking the Chinese about cotton but when shown the hemp seeds used to make it, they are overcome with disbelief. We can find this story in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* (book 16) and the *Huainanzi*, which says: "When the Hu see hemp, they do not understand that it can be used to make cloth."[60] On the one hand, Ji Kang declares his abstention from using divination and physiognomy to determine fate; on the other hand, he does not deny people are without auspicious or inauspicious fate.

Explanation to the Rebuttal to Residences Are Not Auspicious or Inauspicious, One Must Assist Life
釋難宅無吉凶攝生論

by Ruan Kan

Section 1

The Yijing says: The Yellow river brought forth a diagram, the Luo river brought forth writings, and the sages regarded these things as ruling principles. The Xiaojing says: "The ancestral temple is prepared to make offerings to the spirit of the deceased." To establish roots, there are examples like this. Zigong said: "One does not get to hear the Master expound upon the subject of human nature or the way of heaven." Zhongyou asked about spirits but Confucius did not reply. For the non-essential, there are examples like this. Why? In the so-called visible sphere there are ceremonies and music; in the invisible sphere there are spiritual agencies. Whether consulting with men or spirits, divination

brings about the untiring efforts of all those in the world. Thus, Mozi wrote the chapter "Clarifying Ghosts" and Dong Wuxin constructed his doctrine rebutting Mozi. The words of these two worthies unavoidably took different roads yet both of them were misled. Why? Deepening their existence is foolish while deepening their non-existence is absurd, hence these two masters both had one-sided words.

Ruan Kan commences his reply to Ji Kang's rebuttal by quoting the *Yijing*[61] and *Xiaojing* 孝經,[62] the purpose of which is to show how roots are established. Conversely, to show the non-essential, Ruan Kan cited Zigong 子貢 speaking about Confucius and the way of heaven,[63] as well as Zhongyou 仲由 asking Confucius about spirits. The purpose of these examples is to demonstrate that ceremonies and music apply to the visible side of reality, while spirits and ghosts apply to the invisible. Thus, whether consulting with men or spirits,[64] divination brings about the untiring efforts of all those in the world.[65] Ruan Kan then mentions book 8 of the *Mozi* 墨子—"Clarifying Ghosts" (*minggui* 明鬼)—and Dong Wuxin's 董無心 rebuttal, which are mentioned in the *Lunheng*: "The Confucianist Dong Wuxin and the Mohist Chanzi met, and spoke about the Dao. Chanzi extolled the Mohist theory of the help of the spirits."[66] Ruan Kan objects to the participation of spirits, saying attempts to enhance their existence is foolish but attempts to enhance their non-existence are absurd!

When you speak of spirits, are you indicating these? If so, then I would also not dare clarify them. To establish private spirits is to discard those spirits that are public. To establish irregular taboos is to lose those taboos that are normal. To divine a residence or grave is to bring hardship to the ways of a family. To allow the front and back of a residence to flourish is to embolden strange ideas. When you speak of spirits, are you indicating these? If so, then I would quickly dispute them. To obtain the class of things is not to worry about their minute fineries. It is like a person seeing ice at the bottom of a jar and knowing the coldness of the world, or a person examining the second and third stars of the Big Dipper in order to grasp the movements of the sun and moon. You have drawn out my discussion of raising silkworms but you ignore and do not examine the rest. This is akin to a person who is choking or drowning but does not know why, or does not even try to argue for the existence of the boat and grain.

If it is foolish or absurd to give any measure of truth to the spirits, Ruan Kan would have no part in doing so. The reason, he says, is that upholding private spirits is to discard those that are public. Not only this, but creating irregular taboos means losing those that are normal. In other words, divining a residence or grave disrupts the ways of a family, just as allowing the front and back of a residence to flourish encourages strange ideas. So long as people focus on the public instead of the private, on the visible instead of the hidden, and adhere to the normal instead of the

strange, they need not worry about the minute fineries (*weixi* 微細). To show how Ji Kang is over-reaching and missing the broader context of Ruan Kan's argument, he likens their debate to someone who sees ice at the bottom of the jar and knows the cold of the world,[67] or examines the second and third stars (*xuanji* 旋機) of the Big Dipper to know the motion of the sun and moon. Ji Kang, in the eyes of Ruan Kan, is no different from the person who is choking or drowning but is ignorant of the cause.

Section 2

As for fate, it is the allotment we are bestowed while trustworthiness and accordance are the principles that complete it. Thus, it is said: "It is through cultivating the self that one is able to establish one's fate" and, "one who knows fate does not stand under a wall in danger of collapsing." Why? It is the reality of a premature death and successful life. It is also akin to the fact that eating is not a part of fate, but fate cannot exist unless a person eats. This is certainly true. My essay stated: Living lazily in idleness or acting in opposition [to the stars] cannot make Pengzu die prematurely, but you raised trustworthiness and accordance as a rebuttal, which was acceptable. What my essay [should have] said was this: If trustworthiness and accordance are already cultivated, then a person's residence and grave lack significance, hence my example of the longevity palace having no benefit to a child that dies young. Your position is not that a child who dies early can prolong their life with an auspicious residence, or that Pengzu died early because of his inauspicious residence. This is clear. If a person is trustworthy and lives in accordance to fate, they will satisfy their allotted time; if they are idle and live in opposition to fate, their nature will end prematurely. In vain you say there are some people in the world who discuss this. Even if you do not speak of it, who can do so?

Leaving behind his discussion of spirits, Ruan Kan proceeds to examine fate—what is bestowed to us by heaven and requires trustworthiness and accordance to complete. To support his view, Ruan Kan quotes two lines from the *Mengzi*, the first of which reads: "It is through cultivating one's self that one is able to establish one's fate." The second says: "One who knows fate does not stand under a wall in danger of collapsing."[68] Ruan Kan previously spoke of how idleness and acting contrary to the stars will not hasten a person's death, which he now acknowledges was improperly stated. What he meant to say, and does so here, is that the residence and grave of the person who is already trustworthy and in accordance with their fate will no longer be of significance insofar as they will naturally satisfy their allotted lifespan. However, if they are idle and live in opposition to their fate, they will die prematurely. People try in vain to speak of this, Ji Kang said in Section 3 of his rebuttal, but besides Ji Kang, who else has done so, Ruan Kan asks?

Eating too much injures a person's nature while good medicine prevents them from falling ill. This aligns with physiognomy. If you declare one wrong and the other right, you cannot use one to prove the other wrong. Longevity and premature death cannot be sought in a residence but can be obtained in harmony. This is why my essay speaks of what cannot be known. You have forgotten this in your meaning but responded to it in your writing. By curbing it so, you have not found the root. Your rebuttal said: In the times of Tang and Yu, how were fates equally long? Of the soldiers at Changping, how were fates equally short? In discussing fate, we must distinguish who has it and who does not, removing any doubt related to their number. If one person has fate, then one or ten thousand persons will be the same. If this is not related to obtaining fate, is it related to residence? How was it the residences in the times of Tang and Yu were equally auspicious? How was it the soldier's residences at Changping were equally inauspicious? This is something about which I have doubts.

In Section 2 of his original essay, Ruan Kan raised the point that over-eating causes indigestion, which good medicine can cure. This can also be known with physiognomy. On the issue of medicinal remedies, the *Hanfeizi* makes the following observation: "Good drugs are bitter to the mouth, but intelligent people are willing to take them because they know the drugs after being taken will cure their diseases."[69] Although longevity and premature death cannot be found in a residence, they are obtainable through harmony. When Ruan Kan speaks of the unknow-able in his original essay, he is not referring to the profundity of spirits and ghosts but harmony, a fact Ji Kang is accused of overlooking. What is more, when Ji Kang speaks of Tang and Yu and the soldiers at Chang-ping in Section 3 of his rebuttal, Ruan Kan responds here by saying we must distinguish who has fate and who does not, because if one person has it, the number of others having it is irrelevant so long as they all dwell in harmony. Thus, fate arising from harmony is not related to residence.

Your rebuttal said: Among those external things able to injure us, we cannot exhaust their numbers, Shan Bao relied on the internal yet met a tiger. According to your words, this is because Shan Bao forgot what he should fear and dreaded what he should have forgot. Thus, Zhang Yi cultivated his appearance but had the disaster of an internal fever. Although inner and outer are not same, they are equal in being without harmony. It is such that if I were to lose it in a single morning, I would never regain it. This is also an example of a tiger following you. Those who are cautious with the irregular will be deceived by the proper; those who are thorough in selecting a residence neglect harmony. My putting this first does not match the way you describe it. When it comes to your expanding it, I have long hoped for this.

Revisiting what Ji Kang said of Shan Bao in Section 4 of his rebuttal, Ruan Kan reminds Ji Kang that Shan Bao's encounter with a tiger was due to his forgetting what should be feared and fearing what should have been forgotten. This double forgetting takes after the following passage from the *Zhuangzi*: "But when men do not forget what can be forgotten but forget what cannot be forgotten—that may be called true forgetting."[70] Shan Bao was not the only person to forget things that affected his fate; Ruan Kan also mentions Zhang Yi 張毅, who focused on the external and neglected the internal, a tale first told in the *Zhuangzi*: "Zhang Yi looked after what was on the outside and the sickness attacked him from the inside."[71] Although inner and outer are different, they are equal in not having harmony, thus to lose harmony in a single morning is to never regain it.[72] In the end, Ruan Kan concludes that to be wary of the irregular is to be deceived by the proper, and to be exhaustive in selecting a residence is to neglect harmony.

Section 3

Fundamentality, prevalence, fitness, and constancy, these are auspicious descriptions in divining. A high nose and dragon face are features of dukes and marquises. They are encountered by their numbers and natural forms but cannot be made. If a nose and face can be faked, we would lack physiognomy; if auspicious descriptions could be made, we would lack divination. If a person purposely builds an auspicious residence hoping for blessings in return, this is an example of deliberately making a false face and nose, hoping to be a duke or marquis. Such is why Ziyang tattooed his palm and Jujun turned to face the handle of the Big Dipper; both had no benefit to their decline and death. Thus, if a residence that has no particular reason [for being occupied] can be divined, how can it confuse the principles of images and numbers? But to build an auspicious residence and then reside in it, this is not permitted, which is to say things can be faked or deliberately made. Such being the case, it is not the residence that regulates people but people who verify the residence. Is there really any influence from a residence? Or is there no influence from a residence? It seems you have not thought about the root of this matter.

With Ruan Kan agreeing with Ji Kang's claim that nothing surpasses the coverage of harmony, Ruan Kan cites the judgment for the hexagram *Qian*—fundamentality, prevalence, fitness, constancy[73]—and the facial features of the nobles as things that are naturally auspicious and harmonious. Their naturalness is important, Ruan Kan says, because if they were otherwise, there would be no need for physiognomy and divination. To illustrate his point, Ruan Kan equates deliberately constructing an auspicious residence with making a false face and nose; the former expects good fortune while the latter hopes to become a duke or marquis.

Historically, Ziyang 子陽 tattooing his palm and Jujun 巨君[74] turning to face the Big Dipper are examples of such falseness. Thus, a residence does not regulate the fate of its residents, rather, it is the residents who verify their residence. Ji Kang, Ruan Kan says, has failed to consider this.

When a hunter passes through a forest, of all that he encounters, there may be a bird or a tiger. To encounter a bird is auspicious and to encounter a tiger is inauspicious. If a tiger, a good diviner is merely able to know it. Thus, to know auspicious or inauspicious fate is not akin to making an auspicious or inauspicious fate. Hence the Yijing says: "There is no distance or concealment to it; in consequence, one knows of things to come." It does not say one can subsequently make things yet to come. They also divined things since exhausting principle is how they successfully physiognomized their fate. When it comes to divining ages or years, it brought no benefit to the prosperity of the Zhou. Whether a land has auspicious or inauspicious fate, there will be classes of tigers and birds, and if a land is evil, then no matter where one goes, everything will have an inauspicious fate. There cannot be a difference of west and east, or that back and front are not the same, or that the surname Gong will be without injury while that of Shang will be disastrous. If there are blessings and virtue, an auspicious fate will arrive; if there are punishments and disaster, an inauspicious fate will arrive. Thus, the Shijing says: "He has built his chambers, five thousand cubits of walls, with their doors to the west and to the south." When the ancients built their residences, the ancestral temple should have his attention first, the stables and arsenal are next, and the residences are last. They thus depend on human principles to conduct their affairs. To speak of it like this is to know it was not due to Jupiter's punishment and virtue. Cultivating the ancients without disobeying them also accords with my essay. If there are no faults, how can you not know who to follow?

Using the analogy of a hunter who encounters a bird or tiger to illustrate why knowing fate is not the same as making it, Ruan Kan then quotes the *Yijing*: "There is no distance or concealment to it; in consequence, one knows of things to come."[75] Whether the forest brings auspicious or inauspicious fate, there will still be birds and tigers. If, however, a place is wholly evil, then no matter where one lives or travels, the result will be only inauspicious. Good and bad fate, therefore, do not choose their direction of travel or to which side of a residence they should be affixed. Such being the case, people having the surname Gong will have the same fate as those with the surname Shang. There are two important discussions on the regulation of surnames in early China, one of which appears in chapter 33 of the *Baihutong*,[76] while the other is in the *Lunheng*:

> The theory of drawing plans of houses teaches us that there are eight schemes, and that houses are numbered and classed according to the

> names of the cycle of the six *jia* Their position having been fixed, and their names being established, *Gong*, *Shang*, and the other sounds manifest their difference. Houses have the five sounds, as the surnames (of the owners) arc provided with the five tones. When the houses do not accord with the surnames, and the latter disagree with the houses, people contract virulent diseases and expire, or pay the penalty of some crime and meet with adversity.[77]

Aligning himself with these traditional views, Ruan Kan reiterates that blessings and virtue will give rise to an auspicious fate whereas punishments and disaster lead to an inauspicious fate. Relocating this argument to the fate of a residence, Ruan Kan notes the words of the *Shijing*—"He has built his chambers, five thousand cubits of walls, with their doors to the west and to the south"[78]—as well as those of the *Liji*: "When a superior man is about to engage in building, the ancestral temple should have his first attention first, the stables and arsenal the next, and the residences the last."[79] In other words, the ancient sages relied on human principles to inform their actions, not those of the spirits, which is why a person's fate is not the result of Jupiter's (*taisui* 太歲) punishment and virtue. Although Jupiter is mentioned in the *Xunzi*,[80] Ruan Kan would appear to have in mind this passage from the *Lunheng*:

> Concerning the moving of one's residence, they say that to encounter *Taisui* is unlucky, and that to turn one's back upon it likewise bodes evil … In case *Taisui* is in *jiazi*, people on earth must not move in a northerly or a southerly direction. Building a house and marrying, they should avoid this as well.[81]

Ruan Kan justifies his position by saying it cultivates the words of the ancients without disobeying them, a practice he would have learned reading the *Liji*: "In ceremonial usages we should go back to the root of them, and maintain the old, not forgetting what they were at first."[82]

Your rebuttal said: I am not saying a residence that is auspicious can bestow blessings on its own, which would be akin to the good farmer who carries good abilities in his breast and selects fertile fields, but he adds to them weeding and hoeing and is thus rewarded with a full granary. These words are very true! If these three can be cultivated then the farmer's affairs will be complete. If you exhaust yourself by employing what is irregular and seek it in what is empty, this is what the person from the state of Song referred to as helping the shoots grow. It is the way to destroy farming. If divining a grave and residence are exemplified by this, what are we to use as a comparison? Is it the technique of planting? Is it hoeing and weeding? If these three have their equivalents then please tell me about them later; if they have no proof, then we can

see all the more that they are false. If divining by shell and physiognomy has evidence like that, but divining a grave and residence has no proof like this, they cannot be taken as each other's other half.

Continuing his self-defense, Ruan Kan refers to the analogy of the good farmer and his field in Section 7 of Ji Kang's rebuttal. Having praised these words as an example of satisfying a person's affairs, Ruan Kan then takes a swipe at Ji Kang by implying he is seeking the irregular in what is empty, an analogy illustrated in the *Mengzi* as the farmer who tried to hasten the growth of his shoots:

> There was a man of Song, who, worried that his seedlings were not growing, pulled them up. Having done so, he returned home wearily, telling people, "I am tired today—I have been helping the seedlings to grow." When his sons rushed out to have a look, they found all the seedlings were withered.[83]

This, Ruan Kan proclaims, is not only the way to destroy farming, it is the way to delude the world with divination!

Section 4

According to the Shujing, there was a situation in which the duke of Zhou begged to spare the life of another, and yet Confucius refused to allow Zilu to pray for him. Both were equal in being a sage and in being ill, so why were these matters not resolved in the same way? Thus, we know those who serve others have feelings that exhaust their heart-mind and nothing more. This is what we call propriety and refers to the mode by which a person expresses their feelings. Thus, being both an official and a younger brother, the duke of Zhou begged for the life [of king Wu]; in being for himself, Nifu did not pray at all. Is your designing a residence only for the sake of ritual? Or do you take it as being true? If for ritual, then this matter is different from the ancients; if you take it as being true, then you have yet to hear of visible principles. You have not acquired all that I have lost, and you will lose all that you wish to have. When it comes to times and days, this is how the previous kings warned others not to be lazy and advised them to work; however, the times and days of the common people accord with strange taboos and contradicts the principle of affairs. Although the names for such times are the same, their use is actually the reverse. Comparing these three worthies, their equality can readily be seen but one cannot know their differences.

Recall in Section 2 Ruan Kan spoke of Shan Bao forgetting what he should fear and fearing what he should forget; we can say this principle applies here to the *Shujing*'s 書經 account of the duke of Zhou begging for the life of king Wu, and Confucius forbidding Zilu 子路 from praying

for his life. Ruan Kan views these attitudes as the mode by which one's feelings are expressed.[84] What is more, since the duke of Zhou was both the younger brother of king Wu and an official in his court, Ruan Kan takes this as a sign of his acting for the sake of ritual propriety. Nifu 尼父,[85] however, was acting for himself and so his behavior was genuine. Thus, to divine a residence out of faith to ritual is to be like the duke of Zhou, whereas doing so without deliberate reason is to be like Confucius. Unlike the ancient kings who devised auspicious times and days because they believed in them and used them to teach the common people how not to be resigned to fate, the common people of Ruan Kan and Ji Kang's era used times and days to uphold strange taboos and other abnormal beliefs. That the kings of antiquity sincerely believed in the arts of divination is readily apparent in the reading the *Liji*.[86] Even though auspicious times and days kept their names from the period of the duke of Zhou through to Ruan Kan, their significance could not be more different.

Section 5

Your rebuttal said: All that wisdom knows cannot come close to all that it does not know. This is collectively the constant obstacle of the world. If we cannot falsely seek what wisdom does not know, how can we study what wisdom knows? Thus, the ancient gentleman cultivated himself and chose his techniques, completed his nature in order to preserve it, and exhausted himself in this and nothing more. Based on what you have said, do these exist in what is known? If so, they can be distinguished. Do these exist in what is not known? If so, they will be falsely sought. Of these two, one must accord with this. As for small knowing not reaching great knowing, you refuted me saying it was possible. If nothingness is taken as existence, this is to be a cicada. You blamed my verification on what is limited yet I also fear you are wandering in a foreign land and will be hindered by forgetting how to return.

Drawing his reply to a close, Ruan Kan refers one last time to Ji Kang's own words, specifically those from Section 9 of his rebuttal: All that wisdom knows cannot come close to all that it does not know. To this Ruan Kan retorts that not being able to falsely seek what wisdom is ignorant of is to prevent us from learning what it knows. The ancients knew this and so chose to work on cultivating themselves and their techniques in order to complete and preserve their nature. For the *Yijing*, this is precisely the path to the Dao: "As it allows things to fulfill their natures and keep on existing, this means that change is the gateway through which the fitness of the Dao operates."[87] The question for Ruan Kan is whether the ways of the ancient sages were knowable or not? If so, we can use them to grasp the unknowable, but if they are not, we cannot use them to grasp anything. Ji Kang, however, argues that small knowing can indeed reach the great, a view the *Zhuangzi* would

dispute: “Little understanding cannot come up to great understanding; the short-lived cannot come up to the long-lived.”[88] To take what does not exist as having existence is to be as limited in knowledge as the cicada. Thus, while Ji Kang attacks Ruan Kan’s essay for being limited, Ruan Kan turns around and accuses Ji Kang of wandering in a foreign land from which he will forget how to return!

Reply to the Explanation to the Rebuttal to Residences Are Not Auspicious or Inauspicious, One Must Assist Life 答釋難宅無吉凶攝生論

by Ji Kang

Section 1

The former kings passed down their instructions in order to open a system for men of middle intelligence. What their words founded was not disobeyed by the worthy or foolish. What their affairs caused was not changed in the past or present. Thus, we transmit their teachings. If it is spiritual and profound, an unspeakable transformation, but a person lacks ultimate essence, who can they be shared with? Thus, the person who is good at seeking things observes them when they are hidden, and grows them one at a time without using himself as the measure. Based on your discussion, to exaggerate spirit’s existence is foolish, yet to exaggerate their non-existence is absurd. If we take their existence in the smallest of terms, will we still be foolish? If we take their non-existence as absolute, will we depart from absurdity? If taking their existence in the smallest of terms is not foolish, how can I know where the limit of small existence stops? If taking their non-existence as absolute is to depart from absurdity, then exaggerating non-existence can no longer be called absurd.

Ji Kang commences his second rebuttal by appealing to the ancients, specifically to the lasting legacy of their words and deeds. Had they been purely spiritual and profound, who could they have shared them with when the common people lack their ultimate essence? In the words of the *Yijing*:

> To be aware of the numinous and bring it to light is dependent on the men involved; to accomplish things while remaining silent and to be trusted without speaking is something intrinsic to virtuous conduct.[89]

The *Daodejing* offers a slightly different take: “The teaching that is not expressed in words, the advantage that is had by acting without conscious purpose, rare is it that anyone under heaven ever reaches them.”[90] Observing things while they are still hidden yet following them without interference is to use what is unknown to know the known. Ruan Kan,

however, in Section 1 of his essay views any attempt to exaggerate existence as foolish while doing so for non-existence is absurd. Ji Kang pushes Ruan Kan's argument in a new direction, proclaiming small observances of existence will result in a small measure of foolishness, and what is absolutely non-existent has departed from existence and so is not absurd at all.

You also said: To establish private spirits is to discard those that are public. If this is so, then what you hate is that the private injures the public and the irregular harms the proper, not that there are no spirits. Like Mozi, you have established feelings for public spirits, describing a theory on why we should not deepen their presence. However, Mr. Dong relied on the path of proper taboos while you said we should not exaggerate their non-existence. Can the delicate interest and charm of these two worthies be combined without losing them both? The reason for this distinction is that we wish to know if they actually have existence or not in order to clarify the natural and not be deceived. There are many skilled and clumsy discourses that can be relied on, and many polished and unrefined teachings that can be debated.

In Section 1 of his response to Ji Kang's original rebuttal, Ruan Kan noted that having private spirits will result in the elimination of those that are public. Ji Kang does not take this to mean Ruan Kan is denying the existence of spirits but, rather, private spirits injure public ones, and irregular practices harm proper ones. Ruan Kan has also aligned himself with Mozi's fondness for public spirits, arguing their existence should not be given an aura of mysticism. Ji Kang refutes this by describing how Dong Wuxin turned to taboos while Ruan Kan said the existence of spirits should not be exaggerated. When it comes to rectifying the difference between Dong Wuxin and Ruan Kan, we need to know if spirits have existence or not in order to clarify the natural and not be deceived.

Searching for the main point of your elegant essay, you said the He and Luo rivers are not to be trusted and so you borrow the assistance of ghosts and spirits. Thus, an ancestral temple was built to spiritualize their root and Confucius not answering Zilu was to caution him about their insignificance. Such being the case, can you not set your heart-mind at ease with the non-existence of ghosts and spirits and reach a tacit understanding with Mr. Dong? Looking back at the words of the ancients, you dread the harm of the non-existence of ghosts while your form and feelings are opposed. You also established the argument of following the public and discarding the private, wishing to plug the hole in these doctrines in order to avoid being called foolish or absurd while mocking Dong and Mo, yet you say you can reside in the space between them. Although your words and arguments are skillful, I am afraid it is difficult to take them as completely penetrating. This is not what a person hopes for in an investigative essay. Thus, when I say the ancients

combined the virtues of heaven and earth, this shows their actions and responses were natural while the things with established generational successions have their proof. How is it they concealed building an ancestral temple to deceive their descendants and emptily borrowed the assistance of ghosts and spirits to trick people in the future? You will say I am no different from Mozi, and I do not dispute we are the same in believing in the existence of ghosts, but I do not preserve one side out of bias; rather, I clarify all that is and plan the same whether for humans or ghosts in order to equalize what is dark and light. In this way, I seek the heart of things and this is what differentiates us.

As Ji Kang attempts to find the thesis of Ruan Kan's reply to his rebuttal, he turns to its opening which quotes the *Yijing* about the He and Luo rivers and to which Ruan Kan adds they must be assisted by ghosts and spirits. This resulted in two disparate courses of action: one saw the construction of an ancestral temple to venerate the spirits, the other saw Confucius' silence as a warning to Zilu not to legitimize their presence. Indeed, Ji Kang takes Ruan Kan's words with a pinch of skepticism in that Ruan Kan wishes to follow public spirits in a manner similar to Confucius while dismissing the private spirits embraced by Dong Wuxin and Mozi, yet he wants to do so by residing in the space between them. It would appear Ruan Kan has the words of the *Zhuangzi* in mind: "Don't go in and hide; don't come out and shine; stand stock-still in the middle."[91] Ruan Kan's argument has, in Ji Kang's mind, turned out to be less than convincing.

Ji Kang's embracement of ghosts and spirits sets him apart from Ruan Kan by ascribing their existence to the virtue of heaven and earth, meaning the actions of ghosts and spirits are completely natural and do not go against the harmony of the world. This being so, it is incorrect of Ruan Kan to say the ancients built their ancestral temples and borrowed ghosts and spirits to deceive future generations. Unlike Ruan Kan, Ji Kang does not align himself with Confucius and stand against Mozi; rather, he treats equally what is dark and light. This allows him, in the words of the *Yijing*, to "understand the reasons underlying what is hidden and what is clear."[92]

Section 2

Your essay said: Both sages were ill but prayed differently, thus as an official and a younger brother, the duke of Zhou begged for the life [of king Wu] but when it came to himself, Nifu did not pray. This is what we call propriety and refers to the mode by which a person expresses their feelings. My rebuttal is this: If it is suitable for an official and a son to cultivate the form of their feelings, I have not heard Shun or Yu requesting this from their ruler or father; if it is for oneself and one does not allow it, I have not heard of king Wu commanding the blockage of prayers. Did Tang pray in the mulberry forest on behalf of his ruler and father? To deduce from this that it is suitable to take prayer as beneficial, then

Tang and the duke of Zhou used it; as prayer had no beneficial action, Confucius did not beg for himself. This is to take different roads but return to the same place and has the meaning of following the times. You also said: When it comes to times and days, this is how the former kings warned others not to be lazy and advised them to work. In your earlier essay you stated that times and days were not things the grand kings [of antiquity] had, thus I asked about the matter of the fifth heavenly stem. Now you have not replied whether the fifth heavenly stem is right or wrong but said it was how they warned and advised others. These words, once again, allow for two things. Even if the fifth heavenly stem was all about warning and advising, to search for a theory or align with a name, must we say it has its day? Or must we say it has no day?

On the matter of the duke of Zhou and Confucius discussed in Section 4 of Ruan Kan's reply, Ji Kang says it is perfectly acceptable for someone in the duke's position to cultivate their feelings in this way, however, neither Shun nor Yu behaved in such a manner towards their ruler or father. Regarding Confucius not allowing Zilu to pray for him, this would be noble if the persons Confucius looked up to acted the same, but king Wu did not obstruct his son from praying for him and Tang did not pray on behalf of his ruler and father. Thus, despite these historical figures taking different approaches to securing their fate, they all had the same result; we find this notion mentioned in the *Yijing*: "As all in the world ultimately comes to the same end, though the roads to it are different, so there is an ultimate congruence in thought, though there might be hundreds of ways to deliberate about it."[93] The same argument is made by Ji Kang for Ruan Kan's use of auspicious times and days.

You also said: But the times and days of the common people accord with strange taboos and contradicts the principle of affairs. To be aligned with these words is to hate their strangeness and contradictions, hence they are rejected; it is not that the great kings of antiquity had no days at all. That times and days were used in a great age, but those in the future inherited things that were strange and confused, this is akin to the former kings creating elegant music while later ages preferred music that was lewd and obscene. To resent the strange and contradictory, causing you to wish for the rejection of days, how is this different from hating Zheng and Wei and extinguishing the Shao and Wu? You have not thought about their root, seeing them instead as fraudulent and wanting to immediately remove them. Is this not to encounter the person who is choking or drowning and direct your anger elsewhere?

Speaking against Ruan Kan's use of auspicious times and days, Ji Kang rightly points out that when the ancients employed them, they had yet to become taboo and contradict the principle of the world's affairs; future generations not only inherited these times and days, but all the strange

and confused practices that arose with them. Just as Ruan Kan criticized Ji Kang in Section 2 of his reply for not grasping the root, Ji Kang does the same here with Ruan Kan. Instead of seeking the root of the strange and the contradictory, Ruan Kan views them as false and in need of elimination. This is akin, Ji Kang says, to coming across a person who is choking or drowning but directs their anger at being in danger towards something else.

You already agree with divination by shell but there are the six sons of Qian and Kun, and the firmness and suppleness of the branches and stems. These are managed by Yin and Yang, alternate with the five elements, and is how a person acquires their auspicious or inauspicious fate. It is also how times and days came to be, thus the ancients lived in accordance with them. How can a person agree with its flowing yet hate its source? I did not know this could happen. When it comes to the He and Luo rivers and the ancestral temple, you said they were concealed and not trustworthy. When it comes to the Lei sacrifice and prayer, you said they were false and without reality. When it comes to times and days and to firmness and suppleness, you said they were faked to make people work. This is to say the sages deliberately created empty and false things to deceive the world! Even if this were about the trustworthiness of the common people, I would be ashamed by this, but we are discussing the ancients; that one cannot but conclude this is simply untrue! Within these numerous matters, you have sunk into defamation and absurdity. Are your views attacking graves and residences not also doing the same?

While Ruan Kan is supportive of divination by shell and stalks, he says nothing of the six trigrams that come after Qian and Kun and collectively constitute the eight trigrams of the *Yijing*. He also does not speak of the firmness (Yang) and suppleness (Yin) of the twelve earthly branches and ten celestial stems forming the sexagenary cycle in ancient China. The *Lunheng* describes the eight trigrams in this way: "Qian, Kun, and their six sons embody the true laws of nature which Fu Xi and Wen Wang have illustrated to govern the world thereby."[94] What Ruan Kan seems to have overlooked, and which Ji Kang here brings to his attention, is that the eight trigrams and earthly branches and celestial stems are all beholden to Yin and Yang and the five elements. These comprise the natural principle of the Dao and were how the ancient sages determined auspicious or inauspicious fate, as well as auspicious times and days. That Ruan Kan took it upon himself to do away with this system leaves Ji Kang incredulous.

What is more, Ruan Kan questions the motives behind the ancient sages' use of the He river diagram and Luo river writing, as well as the building of an ancestral temple to venerate the spirits. Ruan Kan also proclaims the Lei sacrifice and prayer[95] to be false and lacking reality while auspicious times and days were faked to discourage people from becoming lazy. In other words, Ruan Kan is accusing the sages of antiquity of intentionally creating empty and false things to deceive the

world! This shameful act, Ji Kang says, clearly illustrates Ruan Kan's penchant for insulting the past using absurd claims about the present, and his arguments concerning graves and residences are no exception.

Your earlier essay said: Xu Fu used physiognomy to foretell the marquis of Tiao and Ying Bu becoming king, and if sheep are kept in one pen, whenever a guest arrives, at least one of them will die; this is the natural result of their nature and fate. Now in this essay you say: A high nose and dragon face are features of dukes and marquises and cannot be falsely sought. This means physiognomy and fate are themselves fixed. What physiognomy predicts will succeed cannot be ruined by people, and what physiognomy predicts will fail cannot be saved by wisdom. To entrap a person born into a multitude of dangers, although they may be fearful, they will not be harmed; to restrain a person of worth by assigning them the duties of a low servant, although they may be disgraced by such a worthless rank, they will remain treasured. This is like Bao Ji being in difficulty but later flourishing. All of these cannot be made or sought but are darkly and naturally encountered. If your complete theory of physiognomy is like this, then it would pass through a single road and the present essay would pose no obstacle. In voicing my difficulty with trustworthiness and accordance, you said trustworthiness and accordance are the principles for completing fate.

Here, Ji Kang revisits several sections of Ruan Kan's original essay: Xu Fu using physiognomy to predict the future of the marquis of Tiao and Ying Bu (Section 3), the sheep kept in a single pen (Section 5), and longevity of life as merely the result of a person's nature and fate (Section 3). However, in Section 3 of his reply to Ji Kang's rebuttal, Ruan Kan says the faces of dukes and marquis cannot be faked, hence fate and physiognomy are predetermined. Ji Kang disagrees. The outcome of physiognomy can neither be altered by people nor rescued by wisdom. Should a person be born into a world of danger, they might fear it but they will not necessarily be harmed by it; should a worthy person be relegated to the position of servant, they might resent it but they will not necessarily lose their worth because of it. Indeed, the *Lunheng* makes this exact point: "He for whom wealth and honor are in store, meets with happiness and bliss even in the midst of penury and misery."[96] In light of this, fate can neither be made nor sought but is darkly and naturally received, which explains why Ji Kang rejects Ruan Kan's use of trustworthiness and accordance as the principles for completing fate.

If it must be like this, then fate is completed by trustworthiness and accordance, and declines without them. If the completion or decline of fate is satisfied by trustworthiness and accordance, this is why my earlier rebuttal stated that longevity and premature death reach completion in the foolish and wise. How can we say human nature and fate are natural? If

trustworthiness and accordance aid the completion of the physiognomy of fate, I would like to ask about the evil ways Ya Fu used to reach starvation, the virtues Ying Bu cultivated to become king, the good that the living sheep accumulated to receive their existence, and the crimes committed by the dead to encounter such disaster? Already supporting the physiognomy of fate, you further borrowed trustworthiness and accordance, desiring to deceive both theories while maintaining them side by side. I am afraid this resembles a spear and shield, a situation in which both cannot stand together, nor one in which argumentative words can equalize both sides.

According to Ruan Kan's definition of fate, if it can be successfully fulfilled via trustworthiness and living in accordance with one's nature, then any decline in fate means a person has lost them. It is on account of this that Ji Kang said in his rebuttal that longevity and brevity of life are satisfied in individuals who are foolish and wise. If one assumes trustworthiness and accordance assist physiognomizing fate, how does Ruan Kan explain the cause of Zhou Yafu's starvation, Ying Bu's ascending the throne, the sheep who are not slaughtered to feed visiting guests, and the events leading to the disasters of the deceased? Thus, Ji Kang once again attacks Ruan Kan for wanting to uphold a contradiction (*maodun* 矛楯, lit. spear and shield).[97]

Section 3

Your essay said: Discussing the physiognomy of fate, we must distinguish who has it and who does not, who is without doubt, and who has doubts that are many or few. So long as one person has fate, those at Changping will all be the same. You also said: The person who knows fate does not stand under a wall in danger of collapsing. I say to know fate is to know there is nothing that does not accord with it, hence there is no need to fear a dangerous wall. Knowing fate has its place, what is there to fear standing next to a dangerous wall? If a dangerous wall really causes injury but a person does not choose between a long or short life, knowing which fate belongs to them is to stand there and either have disaster or avoid it and be without harm. In this case, how do we know that Bai Qi was not in fact the dangerous wall at Changping, which you said was the same whether for one or ten thousand people, and that we should remove all doubts no matter how many there are? To say that Changping is the same as a dangerous wall is to use the physiognomy of fate in a fitting manner. When fate is set to arrive and the time corresponds, how are we to carry out the warning not to stand there? Being as such, is there really physiognomy of fate? Or is there really no physiognomy of fate? This is something about which I have doubts.

Moving on, Ji Kang is drawn to the example of the dangerous wall at Changping in Section 2 of Ruan Kan's reply. For Ji Kang, fate is unavoidable and unalterable, hence to stand next to a dangerous wall is to

know there are one of two possible outcomes: either the wall collapses or it does not. The former will result in injury whereas the latter will not. If a person knows their fate is to have a long life yet they knowingly endanger themselves, how is this not unlike the person who does not flee when a thief is about to arrive, or an enemy army about to attack? Fate, therefore, does not make a person invincible. As Ji Kang says, if fate and the time to live or die correspond, the result reflects this. Such being the case, how are we to know if there really is something called physiognomy of fate? Ji Kang has his doubts.

You also said: If Changping is not related to obtaining fate, is it related to residence? How was it the residences in the times of Tang and Yu were equally auspicious? My original doubts concerning your earlier essay were that there is nothing that is not physiognomy of fate, thus I borrowed the example of Changping's difference to rebut the necessity of physiognomy of fate. To broadly search for strange omens to clarify the principles of affairs, why must an auspicious residence serve as its material? In my earlier essay I also clarified why an auspicious or inauspicious residence does not act alone but you are trying in vain to repress these words. Who do you wish to rebut? You also said: How was it the soldier's residences at Changping were equally inauspicious? If this great sameness can reasonably occur but your suspicions are many, are you not more foolish than I? When it comes to protecting divination, you say whether it is one or ten thousand people, it will be the same; however, examining them using ultimate principle, what you are ungrateful for can be seen in this. You already noted the futility of establishing an auspicious residence as it is to look forward to something that does not materialize, yet you desire to salvage physiognomy of fate. Since your feelings are difficult to display, you thus speak like this. We can say this is a good strategy.

Staying focused on Ruan Kan's example of the dangerous wall at Changping, Ji Kang wonders what bearing it has on a person's residence. If the physiognomy of fate is likened to a person standing next to a dangerous wall, then what need is there of an auspicious residence? The fact of the matter is that the fate of a residence requires that it be supplemented with that of its occupants in order to be noticeable. If the soldiers at Changping all experienced the same bad fate, as Ruan Kan stated in Section 2 of his reply, how can he speak of this sameness while doubting the practices of the ancient sages? Noting the futility of building an auspicious residence, which is to look for what does not exist, Ji Kang yet again highlights the discrepancies in Ruan Kan's argument.

Section 4

Your essay said: They also divined things since exhausting principle is how they successfully physiognomized their fate. This is something about

which I have doubts. Your earlier essay took the physiognomy of fate as essential and added to it trustworthiness and accordance. What a zigzag path this is. Now you take divination as completing it, so the tools to complete fate are now three; clearly you do not know how many more pieces the physiognomy of fate requires to satisfy it! If a person only has trustworthiness and accordance and is short on principle, how can you say these are the principles for completing fate? If they mutually aid each other's completion, what can divination add to fate? How can you say it completes fate? I would like to ask, if divination completes fate, and if Shan Bao performed a divination and knew he would face the disaster of a tiger, could he have not concealed himself by residing in a deep palace, urgently preparing his own defense? If the tiger still found him, this shows there is no benefit to divining. Had he acquired the means to be without worry, this means the physiognomy of his fate was defeated by divination by shell. How can you say it completes physiognomy?

Ji Kang's frustration with Ruan Kan is becoming increasingly evident, labeling his thought a "zigzag" (*lilou* 離婁) and with the tools to complete fate now numbering three, not even Ruan Kan knows how many more are needed to complete it! Ji Kang thus pointedly asks: If divination completes fate, and if Shan Bao divined he would be eaten by a tiger, why did he not hide somewhere and ready his defense? Had the tiger still found him, this is proof that divination brings no benefit to fate. Conversely, if Shan Bao had managed to avoid the tiger, this shows physiognomy was proven wrong by the tortoise shell. How can the latter complete the former, Ji Kang asks?

If we say Shan Bao performed divination and was able to escape, this means he originally had a fate without the distress of a tiger, hence the diviners lied and we should urgently avoid them. To say each person has their fate, and they must all obey divination to complete it, then the world has those people who, to the end of their lives, do not divine. Do they lose their physiognomized fate and prematurely end their lives? If we say divination is also physiognomy, then divining is simply one component of physiognomy. How can you say it aids the completion of physiognomy? As such, I do not know if divination by shell and stalks must therefore penetrate the physiognomy of fate, mutually complete it by making it one, or not conclude that each thing acts on its own.

In answer to his own question, Ji Kang explains that had Shan Bao divined his encounter with a tiger yet still managed to flee, this means that prior to the divinatory act there was no threat of a tiger, hence the diviners falsely created this matter and they should not be trusted. What Ji Kang means by this is the following: to claim, as Ruan Kan does, that everyone has their fate yet must rely on divination to complete it, there will inevitably be people who avoid divination. Does this mean they will die prematurely?

If not, this shows divination by shell and stalks is related to physiognomy; if so, divination is unrelated to fate and each thing acts of its own accord.

Section 5

Your essay said: The residence that has no [deliberate] reason to reside in it can be divined, just like physiognomy uses a person's nose and face. If someone purposely builds an auspicious residence hoping for blessings in return, this is an example of deliberately making a false face and nose hoping to be a duke or marquis. Thus, it is people who verify a residence and not residences that regulate people. According to what you said, if a person resides [in a residence] without a deliberate reason, it can be divined. This is to say the person whose fate is auspicious can move forward with their eyes closed. Moving forward and encountering whatever is destined, this person builds their residence in darkness but naturally encounters an auspicious fate. Such being the case, how is the auspicious person alone able to have a fate whereby all of their dark movements are self-attained and proper, which your earlier essay said was a natural fate that could neither be increased nor decreased? Should one suddenly make trustworthiness, accordance, and divination by shell and stalks something that can neither be increased, decreased, or completed, then why are you the only person to forbid residences that can be made and not exhaust the physiognomy of fate when only what is darkly made will be a virtuous residence? If we shut our eyes and still use physiognomy, opening our eyes adds nothing. The wise should understand this even more. When the duke of Zhou constructed his residence, why did he hesitate at the Jian and Chan rivers to question the tortoise shell and stalks, yet receive the sign for the Luo river?

Ji Kang begins this, the longest section in his response to Ruan Kan's reply, by referring to Section 3 of Ruan Kan's reply, specifically that deliberately building an auspicious residence with the expectation of being blessed amounts to deliberately building a fake face with the expectation of becoming a duke or marquis. This proves that people verify their residence; it is not the case that a residence regulates its occupants. Ji Kang takes this to mean people who reside in a house without divining it beforehand yet enjoy an auspicious fate, can continue to live there and have a good fate without turning to divination. To Ji Kang, this is to build a residence in darkness (*an* 闇) while naturally having an auspicious fate. However, Ruan Kan previously stated the natural outcome of fate could not be increased or decreased, so including trustworthiness, accordance, and divination by shell and stalks to the equation, all of which are fixed in measure, goes against his principle that only what is darkly made can result in a virtuous (*zhen* 貞) residence. Ji Kang sarcastically frames the issue as performing physiognomy with one's eyes closed without realizing that when they are opened again, nothing new will appear!

If tortoise shell and stalks can really assist in building a residence, then we know that acting in the dark is not going to exhaust the principle of goodness. If acting in the dark is not exhaustive, then how is not being in the dark not the method to be sought? If you must say that tortoise shell and stalks cannot be better than physiognomy acting in the dark, you will also think that physiognomy cannot be lost by examining cracks in the shell. To divine by shell or not, to act on it or not, all are naturally attained in their own time. If what is naturally attained is complete, then a good diviner will understand what is to be encountered. How can a person act without any reason yet the diviner knows it, but if he acts with a reason, the diviner cannot know it? Now you hate this planned building and compare it to a fake face; you treasure having no deliberate reason and say it is a pure residence. Between the pure residence and planned building, their forms are the same, their achievements are the same, and both are auspicious residences. It is merely that the residence built without deliberate reason is pure, while the residence built with a deliberate reason is planned. The pure residence confers an auspicious fate in a dark encounter, while the planned building has decreased blessings by using what is known. Thus, the forms of an auspicious or inauspicious fate really have natural principles that can be deliberately acquired. Thus, your earlier essay referred to the proof of divining a complete residence, but how can we speak of it?

Assuming divination by shell and stalks can aid the construction of a residence, then physiognomy acting in the dark will not exhaust the principle of goodness; such being the case, why is this method not sought by everyone? To say divination by shell and stalks is no better than physiognomy acting in the dark, one would expect the latter cannot be lost in examining the cracks of the former. The choice of whether to divine by shell or not, and whether to act on the result or not, are decisions naturally made in their own time. Thus, the difference between a virtuous and deliberately built residence is simply this. Having the same form, achievements, and auspicious fate, the virtuous residence bestows its auspicious fate in a dark encounter while the planned residence uses what is known and so receives fewer blessings. In other words, auspicious and inauspicious fate possess natural principles that can be deliberately acquired.

It must be that from a distance or nearby it seems suitable, the sides of the hall have their formulas, and all is unperturbed and offers a marvelous spectacle that can be distinguished from others. Benefitting the people with blessings, it is thus said to be auspicious; harming the people with disasters, it is thus said to be inauspicious. But the physiognomy of dukes and marquis darkly come together with the auspicious. Being like this, although a residence, human nature, and fate are distinct things, they resemble the successful coming together of a farmer and good field. Suppose the duke and marquis move away and continue to enjoy their

auspicious fate while others reside in their auspicious residences; how does it select who is worthy and bestow rewards on them, or choose who is good and give them blessings? If a residence lacks feelings to select who is worthy and does not regret making auspicious those who deliberately plan it, then a house does not refuse people just as a field does not reject the plow of a farmer. How are auspicious and inauspicious fate, poor and fertile soil, not equal?

The above leads to a question: How are we to recognize the proof of a divined complete residence? Ji Kang says that regardless of the distance, the residence appears suitable, the sides of its central hall have their formulas, and it offers a marvelous spectacle (*shuguan* 殊觀) differentiating it from other residences. We call it auspicious when it bestows people with blessings and inauspicious when it harms people with disasters. Thus, the coming together of fate and residence is akin to the coming together of a farmer and the good field. Does the residence or field select who is worthy of reward or punishment? Ji Kang says no. Thus, as a residence does not reject its occupants in the same manner as a field does not refuse the farmer's tools, how can Ruan Kan not acknowledge that fate and the farmer's field are alike?

Those who formerly enjoyed an auspicious fate did so without deliberately seeking it; those who later heard about their auspicious fate subsequently moved there. Both are the same in terms of their residing in an auspicious residence, however, one group sought it and the other did not. How can you call absurd what cannot be made? From this we can say: it is not from the occupant that a residence is verified but, clearly, it is the residence that completes the occupant. To cherish the appearance of a person's face, Ying Bu's tattooed features would not decrease his worth, while removing the high bridged noses of dukes and marquis would not weaken their status. This is to know that dragon faces and high noses are the marks of dukes and marquis, but they are not the only thing that makes a duke or marquis. Thus, markings are not the substance of dukes and marquis, whereas the words "auspicious residence" and the name "auspicious fate" are the reality of a residence. Without proof of auspicious fate and the words auspicious residence, the proof seen will be false and your rebuttal true. If you use a mark that lacks substance to rebut the proof of an auspicious residence, I dare not permit it.

Here, Ji Kang is largely repeating what he said above: people do not verify a residence, rather, it is the residence that completes people. Applying this to physiognomy, Ying Bu's tattoos do not lessen his worth any more than removing the facial features of dukes and marquis will diminish their status. Dragon faces and high noses are simply the marks of the nobles and are not what make the nobles as such. However, the designation "auspicious residence" and the name "auspicious fate" are the reality

of a residence. Such is why Ji Kang insists that using a mark lacking in substance to refute the proof of an auspicious residence is impermissible.

Ziyang was without substance but still tattooed his palm, thus we know how words can enhance things. Jujun seized the kingdom and turned towards the handle of the Big Dipper, a disaster that arose from his biased reliance on things. These cannot be taken as rebuttals. Arriving at the fate of dukes and marquis, it is something they receive naturally and cannot be cultivated or changed. Residence is an external thing whose square or round form is caused by people. As its principle allows it to be made, it is akin to Xishi's pureness being unmakeable while her clothing can. Embroidered robes and fragrant flowers all increase people's admiration of her, while an auspicious residence and family can be successfully known with physiognomy. Thus, the world is without a method to make people yet has theories on divining a residence. Thus, we know that people and residences cannot mutually inform one another, so how can we use the people that cannot be made to sever us from residences that can? When it comes to punishment and reward being the same, this is due to their belonging to a good family and not as you said in your earlier essay, that divining a completed residence results in auspicious or inauspicious fate. If you are able to grasp this, the remainder can be discussed.

Section 3 of Ruan Kan's reply provided the examples of Ziyang tattooing his palm and Jujun turning to face the Big Dipper, both of whom Ji Kang disqualifies as rebuttals to his argument. The same applies to the natural fate of dukes and marquises, not to mention the physical beauty of Xishi. The world has yet to figure out how to make people but it does not lack theories on divining a residence. If, Ji Kang says, people and residences cannot mutually inform one another, how can we use unmakeable people to separate us from makeable residences? As for why residents are equally exposed to punishment and reward, it is because they belong to the same class of affairs and have nothing to do with the perceived auspicious or inauspicious fate associated with divining a completed residence.

Section 6

Your essay said: When a hunter passes through a forest, out of all that he encounters, there may be a bird or a tiger. To encounter a tiger is inauspicious while a bird is auspicious. Although these can be known using divination by shell or stalks, auspicious and inauspicious fate cannot be made. According to what you said, the good and evil of the land resembles the auspicious bird and inauspicious tiger. If a hunter first divines by stalks, he can select where to pursue birds; however, if he is selecting a residence, he can either avoid one that is inauspicious or pursue one that is auspicious. Although an auspicious land cannot be made, it can be selected and lived on; this is similar to the bird and

tiger in that while neither can be changed, a person can choose which to pursue. If divining by shell or stalks can complete physiognomy, and a person can divine the tiger and select the land, why do you only trust one half and not the other?

Here, Ji Kang is returning to Section 3 of Ruan Kan's reply where he speaks of the hunter either meeting a bird or a tiger. The land upon which a residence is built is hence analogous to the hunter's encounter with these animals. Just as the hunter can divine where to pursue birds, he must still be weary of the presence of tigers; the same holds true for selecting a residence. The hunter cannot make auspicious the forest in which he travels, but he can choose where to hunt and for how long. Thus, if divining by shell or stalks can complete physiognomy, as Ruan Kan claims, and the hunter can divine the tiger and select where to live, why are both methods not acceptable to Ruan Kan?

You also said: Whether a land is auspicious or inauspicious, there will be the class of tiger and bird, and if a land is evil, then no matter where one goes, everything will be inauspicious. There cannot be a difference of west and east, or that back and front are not same, or that the surname Gong will be without injury while Shang will have disaster. This a case of taking the strange and inexplicable as a rebuttal; however, it appears you have not yet examined the principle of Gong and Shang. Although this plot of land is auspicious, it may enhance the nourishment of Gong or fall short in raising Shang. A good field, although fine, has crops for which it is most appropriate. How to explain this? People's surnames have five tones and the five elements mutually create one another, thus people having the same surname avoid marriage because they hate being without offspring. If people are truly like this, a plot of land should be too. Thus, the ancients relied on the standards of Yin and Yang and harmonized with the firm and supple. Within this they understood the principle of human nature, saw the three talents as mutually beneficial, and converged with the great thoroughfare, thereby exhausting principle and dealing thoroughly with things in an appropriate manner. Things with the same tonality resonate together, and things with the same material force seek one another, this is their natural allotment. If notes lack harmony, even strings close to one another will not move, but sounds that are the same will respond even if the strings are far apart. This matter is clear yet no one understands it. If the five notes each accord with something, and the five breaths are mutually generated, then a person's residence will be similar to the category of bird and tiger, so how can you see Gong and Shang differently and say that a plot of land lacks auspicious or inauspicious fate?

Staying in Section 3 of Ruan Kan's reply, Ji Kang adds to his discussion of the tiger and bird the orientation of a residence, its front and rear

facades, and the assigning of the surnames Gong and Shang. Ji Kang takes issue with Ruan Kan's inclusion of surnames, saying he has failed to examine their principle. A piece of land might very well be auspicious but it can either increase the nourishment of Gong or fall short in raising Shang. In other words, and as Ji Kang noted in Section 7 of his original rebuttal, even though a good field is fine, some crops are better suited to it than others. The fate of surnames is no different. The reason is because surnames are connected to the five tones and five elements; people with the same surname avoid marriage otherwise their children will be genetically impure. Why should the land upon which one lives be any different?

That the sages of antiquity used the standards of Yin and Yang and harmonized with the firmness and suppleness of the earthly branches and celestial stems, this enabled them to grasp the principle of human nature and see the mutual benefit to be had in harmonizing heaven, earth, and humanity (i.e., the three talents, *sancai* 三才). From this, they converged with the great thoroughfare (*datong* 大通),[98] exhausted natural principle, and met each thing on its own terms. Thus, things with the same tonality resonate together and things with the same material force seek one another.[99] This is their natural allotment. And so, Ji Kang's argument is that if a person's residence is akin to the category of bird and tiger, how can Ruan Kan view the surnames Gong and Shang differently yet say a piece of land is without fate?

Section 7

Your essay said: In vain you say there are some people in world who discuss this, and even if you do not speak of it, who can do so? My rebuttal is: Your earlier essay said one can divine a completed residence, this means it can be spoken of. I would reply: In the world there must be people doing so. You have not sought it in your earlier essay yet you return to the liability of my rebuttal, or those who can speak of it, knowing very well that a grave and residence has auspicious or inauspicious fate. You also said: Medicine that stops disease by acting in oneness [with you] is real but a residence that acts in oneness is false. You also said: If a completed residence can be divined, how can a person turn around and say it is false? For medicine that stops disease, its proof can be seen and so the gentleman trusts it; the residence that is auspicious or inauspicious has a reply that is distant and remote, thus the gentleman has doubts about it. To take what is near or distant as being false or true, I am afraid the places in which you seek such things are few indeed. When I see a ditch and trench, I do not doubt the greatness of rivers and seas; when I observe hills and mounds, I know the height of Mount Tai. If you defend medicine, you discard the residence; when you see what is near, you do not see what is afar. Thus, people close to the sea, to the end of their lives, say there are no mountains or trees, and

the mountain guest whose hair has turned white with time says there are no large fish.

Winding down his response, Ji Kang moves to Section 2 of Ruan Kan's reply where he speaks of medicine. Noting how Ruan Kan argued that medicine is able to cure disease because it acts in oneness with the subject, making it real, yet the residence that acts in oneness is false, Ji Kang offers this reply: medicine that cures disease provides proof that is knowable, hence the gentleman trusts it; a residence provides evidence of its good or bad fate, which is distant and remote, hence the gentleman does not trust it. That Ruan Kan defends medicine but discards residence, sees what is near but is blind to the distant, is akin to people living next to the sea and proclaiming there are no mountains or trees, or the mountain resident saying there are no large fish.[100]

Section 8

Your essay said: All that wisdom knows cannot come close to all that it does not know. This is collectively the constant obstacle of the world. What wisdom does not know cannot be falsely sought. My rebuttal is this: What wisdom does not know physiognomy certainly does not know either. Why is the hidden allowed to be greater than what we know? It must be born in what we originally say does not exist but are forced to prove exists. If the proof for things we are forced to show exists is not included in the number of things we know, combining all the things we have successfully verified we will say they are more than what we know. To know this but not yet reach their principle is to not look for the hidden by means of the seen, or search for the causes and investigate the threads by following Zi and Wu to reach Chou and Wei. The principle of searching for the cause thus resembles the traces a skilled hunter looks for to catch birds. Even if he seeks their traces, there will be times when he does not get them; in catching a bird, when has there been an experience not like this? If auspicious and inauspicious fate are not determined first, you say they cannot be sought later. How is this different from capturing [a bird] without an appointed time, or not daring to raise a foot but stay seated to protect what has no foundation? Speaking from this, to delve into the mysterious and search for what is hidden, how can you say they are false?

To conclude his response, Ji Kang offers one final example of Ruan Kan's flawed thinking, this time from Section 5 of his reply to Ji Kang's rebuttal: what wisdom knows cannot approach what it does not know and this is the constant obstacle of world. What is Ji Kang's retort? Simply that whatever wisdom does not know, physiognomy does not know either! What we do not know lacks existence but in being forced to prove it exists, we must name it. To count all that we are forced to verify, but which in reality lacks

existence, is to conclude the things we do not know outnumber those that we do know. To know this without grasping their principle is not equal to seeking the hidden by means of the seen,[101] or to search for the causes and investigate the threads by following Zi 子 and Wu 午 to reach Chou 丑 and Wei 未;[102] rather, the principle of searching for the cause resembles the traces a skilled hunter seeks to catch birds. How, then, is the practice of divination not different from hunting without an appointed time? Without knowing the time and location of its traces, how can anyone divine what ultimately requires delving into the mysterious and searching for what is hidden?[103] The answer is they cannot.

Notes

1 Ruan Kan 阮侃 also went by the style name of Ruan Deru 阮德如. Readers conversant in French will find a discussion of Ruan Kan and Ji Kang's essays in Holzman 1957: 61–67. Prior to the publication of his complete translation of Ji Kang's essays, Robert Henricks offered a translation of Ruan Kan's opening essay and Ji Kang's initial rebuttal in Henricks 1981: 191–206.

2 For an excellent discussion of the major themes in Ruan Kan and Ji Kang's essays, and how they have developed historically, see the respective papers by Weng Hongwen and Wu Guanhong 2014a.

3 *Guanzi*, chapter 40. See Li Xianfeng, 838; Rickett, volume 2: 111.

4 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 93; Watson, 15.

5 See Legge, volume 2, 1871: 445. The latter half of this quotation is also cited in chapter 20 of the *Huainanzi*. See He Ning, 1412–1413; Major et al., 824.

6 *Daodejing*, chapter 10. See Lou Yulie, 23; Lynn 1999: 65.

7 *Daodejing*, chapter 19. See Lou Yulie, 45; Lynn 1999: 82.

8 *Huainanzi*, chapter 20. See He Ning, 1413; Major et al., 826.

9 *Qihu* 乞胡 was a derogatory term used in the Han and Wei dynasties to describe the Hu 胡, which we stated earlier was another name for the Xiongnu 匈奴 nomadic people who lived on China's northern steppe.

10 Hu is the Chinese name for the star Sirius (*tianlang xing* 天狼星). Kui refers to the first four stars in the bowl of the Big Dipper (*beidou* 北斗).

11 *Guanzi*, chapter 36. See Li Xianfeng, 776; Rickett, volume 2: 80.

12 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 11. See Guo Qingfan, 381; Watson, 78.

13 According to Robert Henricks, this story appears in the *Taiping Yulan* 太平御覽, an encyclopedic work composed in the Song dynasty. See Henricks 1983: 150n26.

14 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 540; Lynn 1994: 52.

15 This is a near-verbatim quote from the *Yijing*, the only difference being Ruan Kan uses "*sui* 遂" instead of "*gu* 故." See Lou Yulie, 539–540; Lynn 1994: 51.

16 *Liji*, chapter 29. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 350.

17 *Hanfeizi*, chapter 15. See Wang Xianshen, 109; Liao, volume 1: 134.

18 *Liji*, chapter 2. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 124.

19 Xu Fu lived in the Han dynasty and authored a text on the arts of physiognomy. He is said to have predicted the fate of Zhou Yafu (d. 143 BCE), who served emperor Jing of Han 漢景帝 (r. 157–141 BCE). Having acquired ever-higher posts within the court, Zhou and his son would eventually be

accused of treason. The shame of this accusation gave Zhou so much anxiety that he literally starved to death. See *Shiji*, book 57: 2073–2074.

20 Ying Bu (d. 195 BCE) helped defeat the remnants of the Qin army and was awarded the title king of Jiujiang 九江 as a reward. In the battle for controlling power between Xiang Yu 項羽 (233–202 BCE) and Liu Bang 劉邦 (256–195 BCE), Ying Bu defected and sided with Liu Bang who made him king of Huainan 淮南. Once Liu Bang founded the Han dynasty, he made sure Ying Bu, who had earlier deserted him, was captured and killed. See *Shiji*, book 91: 2597–2608.

21 *Mengzi*, book 7A. See Yang Bojun 2013: 288; Bloom, 149.

22 *Yijing*, "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 557; Lynn 1994: 76.

23 East Mountain most likely refers to Meng Mountain (*Mengshan* 蒙山) in modern-day Pingyi county (*Pingyi Xian* 平邑縣), Shandong province. Meng Mountain is a branch of the Tai mountain range and its highest peak is 1,156 meters. *Taishan*, whose highest peak is 1,532 meters, is one of the five "sacred" mountains in China, the other four being: *Songshan* 嵩山 (Henan 河南 province) with an elevation of 1,491 meters, *Huashan* 華山 (Shanxi 陝西 province) with an elevation of 2,154 meters, *Hengshan* 衡山 (Hunan 湖南 province) with an elevation of 1,300 meters, and *Hengshan* 恆山 (Shanxi 山西 province) with an elevation of 2,016 meters.

24 *Mengzi*, book 1B. See Yang Bojun 2013: 37; Bloom, 22.

25 *Lunheng*, chapter 68. See Huang Hui, 969; Forke, volume 2: 377.

26 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 14. See Guo Qingfan, 513; Watson, 112.

27 *Liji*, chapter 1. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 94.

28 *Hanfeizi*, chapter 19. See Wang Xianshen, 121; Liao, volume 1: 156.

29 *Lunheng*, chapter 70. See Huang Hui, 994; Rickett, volume 2: 398.

30 According to Cen Yicheng, Ji Kang takes issue with both the basis of Ruan Kan's argument as well as his methodology, yet he fails to counter it with any substantive claims of his own. See Cen Yicheng, 49.

31 *Lunyu*, book 11. See Cheng Shude, 760; Slingerland, 115.

32 *Yijing* "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 542; Lynn, 1994: 54.

33 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 23. See Guo Qingfan, 774; Watson, 189.

34 *Lunheng*, chapter 74. See Huang Hui, 1038; Forke, volume 2: 416.

35 *Yijing* "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 569–570; Lynn 1994: 89–90.

36 *Lunheng*, chapter 6. See Huang Hui, 44–45; Forke, volume 1: 136.

37 *Lunheng*, chapter 56. See Huang Hui, 811; Forke, volume 1: 477.

38 This is a direct quotation from the *Yijing*, Kun 坤 hexagram, "Commentary on the Words of the Text." See Lou Yulie, 229; Lynn 1994: 146.

39 This an extraction from the *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 294; Lynn 1994: 67.

40 *Lunyu*, book 8. See Cheng Shude, 540; Slingerland, 82.

41 *Yijing* "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 560; Lynn 1994: 79.

42 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19. See Guo Qingfan, 646; Watson, 149. Shan Bao is also mentioned in book 14, chapter 8 of the *Lüshi Chunqiu*: "Shan Bao was fond of magical techniques. He avoided the vulgar crowd and detached himself from his age. He would not eat grains or fruit, or wear comfortable and warm clothes, but lived in a cave in the mountain forests. He did this for seventy years and still had the complexion of a small child. He used these means to keep intact the natural span of his life, but he did not use up all his allotted years, for he was eaten by a tiger." See Knoblock and Riegel, 334

43 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19. See Guo Qingfan, 646; Watson, 149.

44 *Lunheng*, chapter 11. "Huangdi had a dragon face" and "Gaozu had a high nose, a dragon face." See Huang Hui, 108 and 113; Forke, volume 1: 304–305.

45 The *Lunheng* elaborates: "Xu Fu pointed to the perpendicular lines converging at the corner of his [Zhou Yafu 周亞夫] mouth, and said, this means death by starvation." *Lunheng*, chapter 11. See Huang Hui, 118; Forke, volume 1: 308.
46 The *se* 瑟 is a twenty-five-stringed plucked instrument while the *konghou* 箜篌 has between five and twenty-five strings.
47 *Liji*, chapter 27. See Legge, volume 2, 1885: 289. This passage also appears in the *Shijing*: "He examined and divined, did the king, about settling in the capital of Hao. The tortoise-shell decided the site, and king Wu completed the city." See Legge, volume 2, 1871: 463.
48 *Xiaojing*, chapter 18. Rosemont and Ames, 116.
49 See Legge, volume 2, 1871: 291.
50 *Huainanzi*, chapter 16. See He Ning, 1115; Major et al., 633.
51 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2. See Guo Qingfan, 83; Watson, 13.
52 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 555; Lynn 1994: 68.
53 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 21. See Guo Qingfan, 714; Watson, 170.
54 *Daodejing*, chapter 17. See Lou Yulie, 41; Lynn 1999: 78.
55 *Huainanzi*, chapter 20. See He Ning, 1401; Major et al., 815.
56 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 535; Lynn 1994: 48.
57 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 17. See Guo Qingfan, 568; Watson, 128.
58 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 17. See Guo Qingfan, 563; Watson, 126.
59 The Rong 戎人 is an alternative name for the Hu people.
60 *Huainanzi*, chapter 11. See He Ning, 764; Major et al., 399.
61 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 554; Lynn 1994: 66.
62 *Xiaojing*, chapter 18. Rosemont and Ames, 116.
63 *Lunyu*, book 5. See Cheng Shude, 318; Slingerland, 44.
64 This line is from the *Yijing*, "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 574; Lynn 1994: 94.
65 This line is from the *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 573; Lynn 1994: 66.
66 *Lunheng*, chapter 20. See Huang Hui, 268–269; Forke, volume 1: 162.
67 This expression is taken from the *Huainanzi*, chapter 15. See He Ning, 1084; Major et al., 604.
68 Both quotes are from *Mengzi*, book 7A. See Yang Bojun 2013: 278; Bloom, 144.
69 *Hanfeizi*, chapter 32. See Wang Xianshen, 267; Liao, volume 2: 35.
70 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 5. See Guo Qingfan, 216–217; Watson, 40.
71 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19. See Guo Qingfan, 646; Watson, 149. This account of Zhang Yi is also mentioned in book 14, chapter 8 of the *Lüshi Chunqiu*. See Knoblock and Riegel, 334.
72 This is a slightly different version of "一曙失之, 終身不復得" which appears in book 1, chapter 3 of the *Lüshi Chunqiu*. See Knoblock and Riegel, 67.
73 This is the judgment for the hexagram *Qian* 乾. See Lou Yulie, 211; Lynn 1994: 129.
74 Jujun was the courtesy name of Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BCE–23 CE) who usurped the throne in 8 CE and declared the beginning of the Xin 新 dynasty (8–23 CE). Wang was killed in the rebellion that arose due to his many failed reforms.
75 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 550; Lynn 1994: 62.
76 The *Baihutong* 白虎通, whose title means "penetrating discussions in White Tiger Hall," took place in 79 CE at the imperial court in Luoyang 洛陽 to decide the content of the Confucian canon. It was presided over by Emperor Zhang 漢章帝 (r. 75–88 CE) and compiled by Ban Gu 班固. For more, see Chen Li.
77 *Lunheng*, chapter 74. See Huang Hui, 1027–1028; Forke, volume 2: 410.

78 See Legge, volume 2, 1871: 304.
79 This line is from the *Liji*, chapter 1. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 103–104.
80 "When king Wu launched his punitive campaign against the tyrant Zhou, the day he set out was inauspicious for military affairs. When they faced east, they were greeted by the great Year-star." *Xunzi*, chapter 8. See Wang Xianqian, 134; Hutton, 61.
81 *Lunheng*, chapter 73. See Huang Hui, 1016–1017; Forke, volume 2: 402.
82 *Liji*, chapter 8. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 408.
83 *Mengzi*, book 2A. See Yang Bojun 2013: 57; Bloom, 31.
84 The sentence in Ruan Kan's text is from the *Hanfeizi*, chapter 20. See Wang Xianshen, 155; Liao, volume 1: 172.
85 Nifu 尼父 is an alternative name for Confucius. Its first occurrence is in the *Liji*, chapter 2. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 159.
86 Specifically, the passage appearing chapter 1 of the text. See Legge, volume 1, 1885: 94.
87 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 545; Lynn 1994: 56.
88 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1. See Guo Qingfan, 11; Watson, 2.
89 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 555; Lynn 1994: 68.
90 *Daodejing*, chapter 43. See Lou Yulie, 120; Lynn 1999: 137.
91 *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19. See Guo Qingfan, 647; Watson, 149.
92 *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 539; Lynn 1994: 51.
93 *Yijing*, "*Xici II*." See Lou Yulie, 126; Lynn 1994: 81.
94 *Lunheng*, chapter 73. See Huang Hui, 1024; Forke, volume 2: 407.
95 This refers to the sacrifice held at the beginning of a military campaign or on the 2nd and 16th day of the lunar month.
96 *Lunheng*, chapter 3. See Huang Hui, 20; Forke, volume 1: 144.
97 The term *maodun* 矛楯 can be traced to this highly amusing story in the *Hanfeizi*: "Once there was a man of Chu selling shields and halberds. In praising his shields, he said, 'My shields are so solid that nothing can penetrate them.' Again, in praising his halberds, he said, 'My halberds are so sharp that they can penetrate anything.' In response to his words someone asked, 'How about using your halberds to pierce through your shields?' To this the man could not give any reply. Indeed, impenetrable shields and absolutely penetrative halberds cannot stand together at the same time." See *Hanfeizi*, chapter 36. See Wang Xianshen, 350; Liao, volume 2: 143.
98 This is a term invented by Zhuangzi and appears once in chapter 6 and again in chapter 17.
99 This line is from the *Yijing*, Qian 乾 hexagram, "fifth Yang," "Commentary on the Words of the Text." See Lou Yulie, 212; Lynn 1994: 137.
100 This line is the inverse of that appearing in chapter 16 of the *Yanshi Jiaxun* 顏氏家訓.
101 Ji Kang would appear to be under the influence of chapter 16 of the *Huainanzi*: "A sage knows from external appearances what lies within. He uses the visible to know the hidden." See He Ning, 1122; Major et al., 638.
102 These are, respectively, the first, seventh, second, and eighth of the terrestrial branches.
103 The final sentence in Ji Kang's text is from the *Yijing*, "*Xici I*." See Lou Yulie, 554; Lynn 1994: 66.



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